

Katri Lietsala & Esa Sirkkunen



# **SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Introduction to the tools and  
processes of participatory economy**

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Introduction to the tools and  
processes of participatory economy

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# 1.

## Foreword

A lot of things have changed after the Participatory Economy and Beyond (Parteco, for short) project started to study the social, innovational, financial and technical aspects of the participatory economy based on social media. The applied research and commercialization has, if not doubled, at least greatly increased.

In January 2006, Finnish enterprises did not know the words social media, or participatory economy too well. National newspaper Helsingin Sanomat had published an article where the journalists stated that participatory economy is here, but all of the examples were from abroad. Headlines especially in the U.S. told about Web 2.0 companies which succeeded in gaining huge audiences – and great amount of venture capital, too.

In the summer of 2006, TEKES decided to fund the University of Tampere application for financing for the research of several important questions.

The Parteco project has urged stakeholders to re-think the relationships amongst content producers, distributors, and audiences and amongst employees, customers and R&D divisions.

After almost two years work there is now something to grasp, since both research and business have evolved during this time. In fact, the

term social media became not just a household name in Finland, but a part of the daily business for several firms during these two years.

On the behalf of the whole project research team, we want to thank **Tekes** and especially **A-lehdet**, **Aina Group**, **Ericsson** and **Tuotantoyhtiö Energia**, who had the courage to dive in to seek out the possibilities social media might signify for them. Warm thanks also go to the **Centre for Open Source Software**, **Mediamaisteri Group** and **Technopolis Ventures Professia** who supported the research.

Parteco's core team included the following researchers: Mikko Ahonen, **Katri Lietsala**, **Marika Ryyänen** and **Lasse Toivonen**, Hypermedia Lab, and **Esa Sirkkunen**. Journalism Research Centre, University of Tampere.

We thank also our subcontractors who helped with the previous reports: **Cai Melakoski**, **Sohvi Sirkesalo** and **Helena Tirronen**, Tampere Polytechnic and **Herkko Hietanen**, **Ville Oksanen** and **Mikko Välimäki**, Turre Legal. You might find interesting to read the report telling about the Finnish content industry views on participatory economy and social media or the report by Turre Legal about the law, business and policy issues.

Our colleague **Mikko Ahonen** has written the chapter *Open innovation, idea management and new R&D*. Thanks for the effort! Lietsala has written most of chapters 2 and 3. Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 10 are also mostly by Lietsala. Chapter 9 is mostly by Sirkkunen. Lietsala and Sirkkunen have jointly written Chapter 7, conclusions and discussion.

Thanks also to all participants of the Parteco surveys and the experts who collaborated with us. We'd also like to thank those colleagues who have been blogging about social media issues on our Some Lab group blog. Please, visit also the Parteco research wiki for further updates and to perhaps contribute some of your knowledge to [www.participatory-economy.net](http://www.participatory-economy.net).

We hope this report can form a basis for new studies that will emerge

as likely as new innovative concepts that use social media and build their business on participatory economy.

With regards,

*Katri Lietsala*

Former project manager of Parteco and digital media adviser at Hypermedia Lab, University of Tampere. Present co-founder and creative director in Gemilo Ltd.

*Esa Sirkkunen*

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# 2.

## Summary

Social media is a term that is used to describe web services that receive most of the content from their users or that aggregate the content from other sites as feeds. The sites build on social networks and on the creativity of the participants of one or more communities. In social media anyone can become a producer, but many of the people see themselves as participants who engage in the community rather than producers.

Social software is important related term which is used to call the technology social media is based on. It has not only changed the status of the audience, but has cracked the traditional, more closed structure of mass media. The social software brought us content management systems that earlier only big companies could afford.

In social media monetary incentives are not obligatory, since for many participants, the opportunity for self-expression and having something worthwhile to do is enough. Yet some of the sites also share revenues in order to lure more creative authors and better qualified content than their competitors have.

The most typical examples of social media are Wikipedia, YouTube, Facebook, del.icio.us, Digg.com, LinkedIn and Flickr. They all represent a different kind of social media service which we have categorized into the following types or genres: *content creation and publishing* (blogs, v-blogs,

podcasts), *content sharing* (Flickr, YouTube, del.icio.us, Digg.com), *social network sites* (LinkedIn, Facebook, Match.com, Friendster, MySpace, IRC-Galleria), *collaborative productions* (OhmyNews, Wikipedia, Star-Wreck etc.), *virtual worlds* (Second Life, Habbo Hotel, WOW) and *add-ons* (RockYou, Slide, Friends For Sale).

Since the sites may rely solely on social media or just adapt some of the features of social media, like personal profiles, feeds, tags, wikis and blogs, some sites may overlap into several genres.

IRC and the discussion forums were surely the first forms of social media, but no one actually utilized the term during those times. We have left out these older solutions from the genre list and concentrated on the new genres.

For companies, social media solutions help to gain not just content, but to try the Open Innovation approach more easily – at least if we think about the technological aspect instead of organization culture and management issues which still remain challenging. Nowadays, companies can outsource and crowdsource with the help of social software.

At its best, social media builds the foundations for a participatory economy where participants gain use-value as the result of community action. People collaborate on social media, and as a return, the action of the individuals produces something new, even unexpected results. The emergence may be profitable business and provide income for firms, but it also has an impact on the social relations and the well-being of individuals.

Yet, the participatory economy is not whatever economy Internet based businesses make possible. It is the economy participants create by just fulfilling various motives. They might not even think of being volunteers. They just participate for reasons, which most often have more to do with their personal interests than additional incentives, like a pay check the web site owner might offer.

In Finland, the participatory economy practices make their way also

into the traditional media industry, but at a relatively slow pace. This means that, the core of journalism and media production has remained quite closed and in the hands of media professionals. But at the same time the business strategies are changing in the media industry from “walled gardens” to more open distribution.

In the future a great amount of professionally produced content will be available in open channels, without dedicated distributors. In fact, people already use web sites that contain content and different widgets not just from the actual site and its owner, but from other sites supporting that site with their own effort.

If users want, they can even aggregate the content themselves and enjoy only the newest microchunks on their feed readers immediately when the data is published without separate visits to publishers’ sites. In addition, mash-ups show how to combine different layers of content from several sources into a new media package. That is quite a change.

In the old model sites were like countries that had strict rules about who could cross the country border, which of the people will have the work permit, which commons are allowed to import or export whereas social media has opened at least some of these borders to unchain the import and export of commons.



Lietsala and Sirkkunen base this report on their experiences and findings during the Parteco project in 2006–2008 at the University of Tampere. The research team has carried out the research in two main fields: the media publishing and the work organizations. For this reason, the view concentrates more on what happens to the content and to the traditional media, and not so much on the way people link with each other.

The three public case studies presented in this report are the collaborative movie production project called Star Wreck, the blog on the website

of Image magazine and the citizen reporters' portal Apureportterit on the website of Apu magazine. All cases are Finnish.

Our cases have shown that different approaches in the collaboration with the audience lead to different end-results. The cautious approach of A-lehdet created different kind of results than the open, more free and loose co-operation of Star Wreck which worked without a ready-made institution behind the project to set the structures beforehand.

In addition, the researchers bring out some social media examples based on the observations in the field. These notes are included to raise discussion and thoughts.

# 3.

## Talking about social media

In this chapter, we try to ooze out what is the core of social media in two ways. First, we ponder the forms and processes that are more or less in common in the various social media sites. Second, we seek and define those genres in a more profound way.

So: how to know whether the site is social media or not?

### Definitions for social media

Social media is one of the buzzwords that came along the web 2.0 rhetoric, along with some other terms, somewhere around 2005. As such, the concept does not have a strictly defined meaning, but people using the concept want to stress that there is a new era, maybe even a revolution taking place.

The concept has caused lots of criticism among media researchers. One of the metaphors that it raises is that the traditional media has been somehow unsocial, which is not the case. Another question is what the latter term *media* in fact refers to. In social media, the core is more or less in 'one to few' or 'one to many' types of communication practices.

We suggest taking social media as an umbrella term, under which one



can find various and very different cultural practices related to the online content and people who are involved with that content.

There are some relatively stable practices like blogging, social networking and participating in wikis. And, then again, there are others that are still more in the process of becoming something; like microblogging or using add-ons to build new kinds of hybrid sites.

Overall, the term social media began to gain publicity in the beginning of this century. The biggest fuzz began in 2005 when O'Reilly labeled a conference with the word Web 2.0 ([Wikipedia](#)). Yet, one should remember that Web 2.0 is not a synonym for social media, since it is an even looser concept in reference to online services and technologies that do not necessarily include the media aspect, or any social activity for that matter.

#### —From audience into producers

As early as in the 1970s, Toffler (1980, 266–269) wrote about [prosumers](#) who are productive in the so-called *phantom economy* which the economists perhaps did not remember to take into account, but which some of the corporations underpinned to support their own businesses.

Back then, the active customers made self-service supermarkets and gas stations possible, today the active participants of the online communities enable self-made media.

Tappscott and Williams (2007) have also enunciated the same theme in the 21st century when writing about [prosumption](#), whereas Bruns and Jacobs (2007) ponder exclusively '*the produsage-based personal media*' where the user becomes a producer – a [producer](#).

The main difference in these terms is that the terms prosumption and prosumers leave people as part of the business, mainly as consumers who are there to buy things and cause economical consequences, whereas 'producer' suggests perhaps a more active role for the participants, without

the commercial purpose that determines the nature of the individual's role on the net.

From all of these concepts, the producer is the dearest for us as it describes the people participating in the social media. It leaves more room for 'the production'. It also does not impose on the active users, who create content voluntarily in the social media, any certain financial status as the primary or only depictive perpetrator for their actions.

#### —Emphasis on the content

In social media, people voluntarily *share content*, for example videos, text, images, music, through online platforms and with the help of applications that are based on *social software*.

Though some refer to social software as a synonym for social media, we suggest that social software signifies the code, software and technologies utilized for social media implementations. With the term social media we want to emphasize the nature of the content and the active social roles related to the production and using; not to the technology in itself.

When one, for example, talks about RSS or Atom, the technologies that enable feeds, the topic has more to do with social software than social media. If one concentrates on the content and its social uses it is a question of social media according our understanding of the term.

The content in social media has its own audience as the traditional media, like TV, radio, magazines and newspapers have, but the biggest difference is that people enjoy sharing the content they have made themselves or maybe copied from others. This really is perhaps the greatest change. People either generate (UGC) or create (UCC) the content themselves or bring it from somewhere else (UDC).

UDC is abbreviation of user-driven content; UGC refers to user-gen-

erated content and UCC to user-created content. The biggest difference is perhaps in UGC and UCC in comparison to UDC, since user-driven content, UDC, underlines more precisely that not all content is created by the user, but just copied from other sources to another location.

### —Being social

The content can be public to anyone to whom the social media channel is available, and/or to the social network of people the person either knows or has invited to see the content. In some cases, people even have social media platforms only in private use for themselves and no one else.

The social network is one of the most typical features of social media in addition to the content aspect. In this report, the term social networks refers to the online presentations where people's connections are made visible.

The visibility of the network is possible for example by showing the personal profiles linked together through the content or metadata the participants share, through the actual or imagined relationships people have added on the site they utilize, and even through the participants' actual behavior that the action reports of the site track and then document to embody who belongs to whose network of people.

In general, the social media sites show social networks with the help of different profile pages that people can link together by joining networks or groups, or by inviting other people as their friends. On the other hand, the individuals are the nodes linked together (Barabási 2002), and it makes one wonder if the networks in social media also scatter across many websites, like the blog rolls well show.

Let us take a slightly deeper look on the subject. A blog roll is a list of blogs the bloggers publish in the sidebar of their blogs. It is problematic to determine whether people actually feel they belong to a social network

when they are, for example, a part of someone's blogroll.

Perhaps the blog owners mentioned are unaware of their presence in the list. Also, the maintainer of the blogroll might only bookmark relevant blogs; to serve their own audience with the best picks.

In this kind of case, readers hop from one blog to another through the blogroll on the blogs. They are in a network, but the blogs in the blogroll perhaps reflect more the related content and the identity of the blogroll owner, than the sociability with the other bloggers.

Naturally, nothing prevents the bloggers from being involved and interacting, too, but it is too vague to construe whether a social network exists between real people. If the network exists, it is surely a loose one, at least if solely evaluating the blogroll.

It is also worth noticing that the people's networks in the social media can be, but are not constrained to be, the same as the networks outside of the web. The people can pretend to be someone else, as well as simulate actions that are by far similar with the reality outside of the social media. Just think about the avatars with different sexes, races, ages and nations etc. in the virtual life, like Second Life, or all the funny images in Facebook profiles. There surely are plenty of cats, dogs and fairytale figures who know how to tap the keyboard.

So to say that the media is social signifies here that, without the interaction between people, platforms would be empty, and could not succeed even though the software had splendid features to utilize. And in social media, *'the people'* refer especially to those individuals who voluntarily participate, with or without monetary incentives at hand.

— Includes profiles, tags and feeds

The designs of social media user interfaces actually help to find the suitable content in rather similar ways. The sites may use, for instance, search,

groups, favorites, recommendations, categories, tags and feeds.

Often, the social media sites also show content related to the specific social networks and transform single websites into channels one can subscribe to.

The content streams also end up into *mash-ups* that contain a mix of content, possibly from several authors and sources online. The new type of media combinations surely make the 90s hybrid solutions look a bit ridiculous. Back then, for example a CD-ROM that contained hyperlinks made people say ‘wow’ whereas nowadays anything in a feed can be mashed together into a new service. Talk about progress in design!

What is also new is that users themselves categorize the content and add the metadata, like tags, which are the keywords to ease up the search next time the same user logs in.

Users have their own account or accounts to handle the content and interaction with other participants of the social media service. For the account, they need a user name, which often is also the nick name utilized publicly. In addition, the user has a password to protect the account and its content from identity thieves as well as privacy settings to limit who can see content and not.

In fact, registration as a member is more of a rule than an exception, since all data is connected to the people’s user profiles.

Copyright infringement is another issue to describe social media. There is usually only little if any content moderation from others or by the site owner before publishing. Even after the content is published, only the network of users might be the ones to determine whether the content is legally correct, not offending or even of good quality. This has led to copyright policy issues.

Not all people who refer and adopt commercial content, like music videos, music clips or digital images, care or even know about the limitations related to the copyrights. Yet the tools help to easily copy, distribute and mix the content found from the net, and many of the social media

sites are built on the content that is brought from outside of that specific platform.

— Flexible media consumption and production

Though the main emphasis in the definition of social media is on participative individuals and their communities, also firms from several different fields have adopted social media tools in their businesses, like blogs for their organization communication or wikis for the knowledge, project and customer management. In addition, social media is business, with firms coping on the market, in search for financial success.

Social media has even made possible a new type of production model.

When platform designers leave the social media site's technological interface open, the site can be tuned up or developed further with software add-ons. These work as new features of the site without additional resource requirements from the actual main site owner. Earlier, this kind of development came from subcontractors or was done in-house.

The social media design may, for example, combine the main web site, like a social network site, with the add-ons, that support the community and help users in different ways to spend their time and produce new content.

With the various 3<sup>rd</sup> party applications and the feed and aggregator technologies, people easily let the content flow from external sources onto new sites. This is not always a good thing, since the same content gets copied to multiple places which after a while leads to a rather monotonous repertoire.

## Some main characteristics

To summarize, we have noticed the most popular social media sites comprise 5 main characteristics:

- 
1. There is a space to share the content.
  2. Participants in this space create, share or evaluate all or most of the content themselves.
  3. It is based on social interaction.
  4. All content has an URL to link it to the external networks.
  5. All actively participating members of the site have their own profile page to link to other people, to the content, to the platform itself and to the possible applications.
- 

Social media also has several other features that often occur, but are not obligatory:

- 
6. It feels like a community.
  7. People contribute for free.
  8. There is a tagging system that allows folksonomy.
  9. Content is distributed with feeds in and out the site.
  10. The platforms and tools are in the development phase and changed on the run.
- 

We also found the four key principles that are very similar to our findings from Bruns (2008, 23-30), who states the four principles below apply across all produsage environments where users of the web site produce the content instead of paid staff. His list looks like this:

- 
- ...✧ Open Participation, Communal Evaluation
  - ...✧ Fluid Heterarchy, Ad Hoc Meritocracy
  - ...✧ Unfinished Artefacts, Continuing Process
  - ...✧ Common Property, Individual Rewards.
- 

The produsage to succeed the web site owners need to obtain “*inclusivity, not exclusivity*” and they should stick with “*as broad range of available knowledge, skills, talents, and ideas as is available*” (Bruns 2008, 24-25).

### **The genre based model of social media**

It is difficult, if not impossible, to build a single and everlasting definition of social media in a situation where the field is changing constantly. Here is an attempt at seeking the core of these practices from another angle, from the evolving genres of social media.

Please note that we do not try to build a holistic picture of social media, but to bring more light to the various aspects of social media compared to the traditional media.

For us a genre in general means the socially shared expectations and codes that we have about different forms media production like movies or literature. A genre is not just a certain type of text, but rather a way to understand, classify, express, interpret and produce content and the social relations coded in these conventions. (Discussion about the role of genre in the contemporary media research, see for example Ridell 2006)

One can claim that there are generic differences evolving in the different social media practices. Of course this is all very tentative, but still at least the following genres can be rather easily distinguished. Some of the descriptions of genres are based on the types that are listed in What is Social Media by iCrossing (Spannerworks 2007):



- 
- ❖ content creation and publishing tools (blogs, wikis and podcasts)
  - ❖ content sharing sites (Flickr, YouTube, del.icio.us, Digg.com,...)
  - ❖ social network sites (LinkedIn, Facebook, Friendster, MySpace, IRC-Galleria, ...)
  - ❖ collaborative productions (OhmyNews, Wikipedia, StarWreck, ...)
  - ❖ virtual worlds (Second Life, Habbo Hotel, Warcraft)
  - ❖ add-ons (GoogleMaps, RockYou, Amazon Grapevine, Friends for Sale!, ...)
- 

If we start from these genres, it becomes evident that there are different motives and ways to act within the social media.

The next table lists the genres and the most probable practices that these genres offer for users and producers.

Genre	Main practices
content creation and publishing tools	Production, publishing, dissemination
content sharing	Sharing all kinds of content with peers
social networks	Keeping up the old and building new social networks, self promotion etc.
collaborative productions	Participation in collective build productions
virtual worlds	Play, experience and live in virtual environments
add-ons	Adoption of practices from one site to another. Transforms a service into a feature of another site or adds new use-value to the existing communities and social media sites through 3 <sup>rd</sup> party applications.

**TABLE 1.** Some (preliminary) genres of social media and their activity types.

Various genres signify that we, as users, can choose between varieties of activity types and user roles. When compared to traditional media, we have now lots to choose from. With the various new tools, activities and user roles available people can flexibly change from adventurer to citizen or socializer, according to their needs.

It is also evident that social media touches the layers and ways we are social in a different manner than the traditional media does. The mass media usually stays “out there” in the sphere of public life, and the different genres of social media stay closer or even within our communities, groups and families.

Yet these social media genres also offer new kinds of forums for firms to collaborate with. For example, blogs are social media even if the author is the company’s CEO or a journalist from a media house who gets paid to have a blog.

With the genre list, we do not try to build a holistic picture of social media, but to bring more light to the various aspects of social media compared to the traditional media.

### **Trend to concentrate on the core function**

We have listed add-ons as one of the social media genres. These open interface applications are one of the biggest changes cracking the media structure.

Add-ons are applications people can add to their main social media site to get a better user-experience. The actual main site, the so called *master site*, would work without the 3rd party applications, but would be a much poorer design. This is a sort of [parasitism](#), where the *interaction of the organisms* may benefit the actual host, or in a worse case cause a lot of harm.

The owner of the master site, the host, is most likely different than

the developers of the applications that add *extra layers* to the site and enhance the user experience. With this kind of structure, some sites can become *containers* of content whereas other sites are *the social network maintainers*.

For example, CEO **Alex Welch** tells that the photo sharing site Photobucket has a strategy of getting social network features from other sites. Photos can be linked to MySpace, Facebook, Xanga, Friendster, or to a personal blog, like Blogger.

When sites combine their forces, participants have the advantages of both types of sites without changing to a new, third site.

*We focus very much on not being a community. -- We let the communities build around us. -- If one social networking site goes away and another comes up the user just moves, but their content stays with Photobucket.,* the CEO of the site states ([CNNMoney.com](http://CNNMoney.com), Kirkpatrick 2007).

# 4.

## Social media genres

As we stated earlier the social media genres can be categorized as [content creation and publishing tools](#), [social network sites](#), [content sharing sites](#), [collaborative production sites](#), [virtual worlds](#) and [add-ons](#). All these genres offer virtual spaces designed to encourage users to distribute content. What is common to all of these is that the content comes mainly from users and not from the paid staff and employees.

When we pondered the boundaries of the social media genres, we ended up leaving out all those online channels and services that are for messaging from one person to another, but not from one to many. It is ‘social’, yes, but not ‘media’ oriented.

We were also challenged by how to take into consideration the early types of interaction, like e-mail lists, discussion groups and forums, since the Internet has been social from the start. The technologies just were different and the existing tools somewhat limited the depth of interaction and publishing possibilities.

For example, e-mail is still the most common tool on the Internet, though ARPAnet developed it already in 1972. A few years later, in 1975, came the list servers. After this, senders could send posts to many people instead of just one person. List servers had other advantages as well. With trickle through, one could receive each message as it was. Another

choice was to take a digest which consisted of a list of messages. (Preece & al. 2003)

These digest lists are somewhat reminiscent of media instead of mere social interaction between different people.

The one to many and many to many models of communication in MSN, AIM and Yahoo Messengers or through applications like Skype are in the grey area, like the digests of e-mail list discussions that have audiences. Yet, we have bluntly decided to leave those out of the main social media genres.

Some might feel that this violates the nature of the wide variety of social actions on the net, but let us explain a bit.

Even though there might be small groups of people communicating together, like in Skype or messenger chats, it has more to do with social interaction than being a media. This is the reason why e-mail and messenger services are not directly listed as social media genres and telephone calls are not defined as media. They promote social interaction, but have more to do with interpersonal communication.

However, we agree that e-mail lists, public Internet relay chats (IRC) and messenger-type group chats, discussion groups and forums are all the early forms of social media. In our genre list, these can be added under any other social media genre than virtual worlds and add-ons if a) the particular task or activity type was or is the same as with the main genres (TABLE 1.), and b) if the message can be recognized to have at least some sort of an audience, no matter how passive or active.

Due to the resource limits, we cannot go into the details of these older forms, but recommend that anyone interested takes a look at some of the earlier writings, like Rheingold (1993) and Slevin (2000).

The next chapters will present the genres more closely.

## Content creation and publishing tools

The content creation and publishing tools genre includes blogs, wikis and podcasts.

### —Blogs

A *blog* is basically an online publication where the entries are published with the most recent first. There are a number of features that make a blog different from other websites:

- 
1. **Authorial voice:** blogs tend to be written in a personal, conversational style. They are usually the work of an identified author or group of authors.
  2. **Links and trackbacks:** the services make it very easy to insert links to other websites, usually as reference to an article or blog post, or to provide further information.
  3. **Comments:** each blog post has a comments section, which effectively acts as a message board for that article.
  4. **Subscription:** blogs can be subscribed to, usually via RSS technology. Blogs can be created quickly and easily using any of a number of services. (Spannerworks 2007)
- 

The person who posts the reverse-chronological postings is called the *blogger*, the actual posting is called *blogging*. With the term ‘blogosphere’, people refer to the whole ecosystem of blogs; the bloggers themselves, blog posts, comments, permalinks, trackbacks, blogrolls and other features that help to interlink a network of single online publication units, the blog and their messages. (Bruns & Jacobs, 2007)

Bloggers can be amateurs, amateur-professionals, and/or professionals.

If the blogger updates many blogs, she is multiblogging. Like one person can have many blogs, a blog can be also a collaborative blog. This kind of group blog has multiple authors instead of just one.

Blog farms group plenty of blogs all together. There is usually one dominant blog to aggregate content or function as a channel to all other blogs on the farm.

Like in social media in general, entering into the blogosphere does not require much technical skill from the users. You have plenty of tools for blogging even for free, like WordPress and products from the Six Apart. Commenting is easy, yet people seem to comment only new posts (Herring & al 2005, 16).

The feed readers help to arrange the content distribution from blogs, but also to arrange the reading experience in a way that one does not necessarily have to visit the blog on the actual site anymore, but can consume all postings through tools like Google Reader or straight from one's own e-mail.

Like in all social interaction, blogs are good for reflecting one's self. Bruns and Jacobs (2007, 5) have a rather romantic view on blogging:

*-- bloggers have the chance to question their understanding of issues, engage in discussion, present their ideas, seek out approval for their notions, and grasp some sense of purpose, order, and hope.*

However, blogs are by far mere personal bursts of individuals on the way to personal growth. Although anyone can link to any site and in the most cases also comment on any blog post without a moderator standing in the way, the system is still as good or as bad as its users, the bloggers.

Jeffrey Hill (2005) brought up in his dissertation that small business bloggers trust blogs to be an effective marketing tool, though the bloggers know no measurable ROI (return on investment). Hill also noticed

that dialogue with customers did not happen quite as often as one could have expected in reference to literature.

Private people do a wide variety of things with blogs, but so do the public companies and organizations. Bruns and Jacobs (2007) refers, for example, to *diary blogging*, *corporate blogging*, *community blogging* and *research blogging* as blog genres.

The objectives of blogs vary from knowledge management into publishing complete stories which can be gossip like in the [celeblogs](#) or more official news, like [the Guardian Unlimited News](#). The stories may be personal accounts of a day, like in a diary, or reminiscent of a traditional media site, with professional articles related to a specific theme. Sometimes, blogs look like literature, especially with the story blogs called *slogs* ([Wikipedia](#)).

Blogs can also be categorized based on the form the content is published. This means written blogs, photo blogs and video blogs. The latter often gets shortened into *vlogs*. One big sub-genre of blogs is *microblogging* streamed with services like [Twitter](#), [Jaiku](#) and [Pownce](#).

To define blogs even more, openness could be taken into account as well as the type of the blogger. Bloggers can set their privacy so that all the content is kept only for one's own eyes, or for a close circle of friends.

Sometimes, blogs have an invitation-only audience, where, for example, a group of people participating into an event or project gets the invitation, but no one else does.

Then, there are public blogs which are open to anyone, internal blogs that are open only for the co-workers of the same team or organization, and external blogs with the audience including the major stakeholders of the company or perhaps the customers of some service or product.

As nothing is perfect, the blogosphere also includes fake blogs, called *flogs*, where an advertising agency pretends to be an authentic user.

After blogging reached popularity, it has turned into mainstream media and a marketing channel, into e-learning projects, project home pages etc.



All this makes it necessary to clarify the term with genres and *think about the contexts of use*, since ‘a blog’ can already differ so much (Bruns & Jacobs, 2007).

Sometimes, users adopt blogging tools in a way which even makes the blog unrecognizable as a blog.

Blogs have in a way challenged the definition of the online community. Blogging has become one possible medium for creating an online community; a set of blogs linking back and forth to one another’s postings, while discussing common topics (Chin & Chignell 2007).

## —Wikis

Wikis are websites that allow people to contribute or edit content in a collective way, without losing track of different versions of the document after updates. A wiki can also refer to the wiki software which firms install on their own server or subcontractor’s server to utilize for several purposes.

Wikis replace, for example, the intranet, ease up the work of helpdesks and disseminate information on a specific field to all the stakeholders of the firm. Wikis can turn into media sites as well, like the wiki called [wikiHow](#) that combines How-to Manuals from people.

Wiki works well for all tasks that could benefit from the option to simultaneously edit content. They are great for collaborative working, for instance creating a large document or project plan with a team in several offices.

Though [Wikipedia](#), the most well-known example of wikis, is open to anyone, wikis can also be set for purely private or semi-private use. One can also build a wiki for commercial purposes, like [Wikia](#), which is a collection of freely-hosted ad-supported wiki communities. It uses the MediaWiki software like Wikipedia does, too.

MediaWiki and TWiki are some of the open source wiki platforms, but there are also some commercial products, like Confluence and SocialText.

Wikis are a good example of participatory design and knowledge. Wiki is a group application that works with a web browser and access to the Internet. Wikis can be either internal or open to anyone who wants to edit the content. Some of the wikis could also be semi-open, so that they offer the option to sign up, for example to all who have customer numbers, but not to whoever visits the website.

Wikis mostly include text, but the technology does not prevent using sounds, videos and images either. Wiki pages are sometimes also called articles.

The use of a wiki is rather simple and requires little, if no special technical skills. The user first clicks the “Edit” link on a wiki page or writes a search word that is not yet updated on the site. After that, the script shows the raw text file on the web browser for the user to start to edit.

At the end, when the content is ready, the user presses the “Save” button which will preserve the modified content on the wiki database for further use or modifications.

If the user has marked a word to a hyperlink in a wiki page, but the wiki includes no description page on that word, the wiki will offer an empty page template for the users to fill in the missing information.

On the other hand, if there already is a corresponding page, the wiki gathers that page and shows it as a result on the user’s web browser. This content is, again, there to be modified if the user is not happy with the result she or he sees.

The best feature is that the history of edits remains, so that false or otherwise inaccurate content can be replaced with any of the earlier versions made. From the earlier versions, it is also easy to see how the topic has evolved during time and who have participated in the end result one has opened to read or watch.

The communication can be asynchronous or collaborative, simultane-

ous group work. There are several ways to use wikis: for mailing, discussions, to compose and edit reports, to collect feedback, test ideas or to distribute formerly hidden knowledge to co-workers or major stakeholders.

**John Buckman** even adopted wiki technology for translating his website called BookMooch, which offers book traders the possibility to give and get books from other readers all across the world. First, he presented a machine translation, and later, the users themselves corrected it without any additional fees or awards from the website or its owner.

To publish an article, a report or a book as a wiki is slightly problematic if the author wants to lead the reader through a specific path, from one page to another. The author has to write text that works no matter from which page the reader jumped in, since wikis have no “back” relationships, but content links together in several other ways, like Leuf and Cunningham have shown (2007, 132–134).

We noticed the same during the editing process of this Participatory Economy and Beyond report. There is not much to do to guide reader from the beginning to the end complying with the actual structure the authors have pre-defined. Instead, in a wiki people navigate according to their preferences and may open the report from whatever page due to the deep linking.

To ease-up finding the relevant content further, the wiki design has to include at least *“the fixed hyperlink to the top page of the database, which should be uniquely identifiable wiki name. Search functionality (including Backlinks) should also be available from anywhere.”* (Leuf et Cunningham 2007, 133)

—More vivid than intranet

The technological idea behind wikis is not rocket science. When a user requests a wiki page, the script searches the relevant file and changes its

marked-up text into HTML. If users have selected words, these show as hyperlinks that lead to the corresponding page in the wiki, to the website URL outside of the wiki or to a totally new wiki page to be modified.

The customers most likely want to maintain their user name and passwords already in use in the organization's other web services. That means more work for the wiki developer, but is not an impossible task to solve.

Another technological challenge is to integrate wiki into the existing systems. It would be a good start for new studies since there is little if any research on how well different wikis can be integrated with other systems, and, on the other hand, how often the wikis remain as separate software without integration, and what consequences can occur because of this.

Some firms are so technically skilled that they make their wikis by themselves. The Technology Centre Hermia in Tampere, Finland, is one of those firms. **Petri Räsänen**, who is the development director of the Digibusiness Cluster Programme and the head of open source and media team, mentions that they began to use their own wiki solution in 2007 with good results.

*– The wiki is part of our intranet that includes a blog, a discussion forum and the wiki, and all of those are open source. It was good that we were able to integrate the package by ourselves so now it looks like us. In fact, it has received more users than any of the earlier intranet solutions, Räsänen reveals.*

The somewhat rigid usability of the wiki and the integration of the wiki with forum and blog tools caused the most the work for the wiki developers at Hermia.

A firm called Ambientia took a different road than Hermia. It is one of the firms who have a partnership with Atlassian to sell its products, which include the commercial enterprise wiki Confluence.

When Ambientia began to utilize the Confluence wiki in its own firm, the intranet shortly withered away. That was not the actual plan, but just happened when the organization began to contribute more into the wiki and left the intranet on its own.

Ambientia's customer cases have shown in practice that if the intranet is more like a platform that connects to different applications and information systems, the wiki most likely does not replace the intranet totally, but becomes an additional solution which the communication department, for example, can adopt.

The difference between a wiki and the intranet is that when one notices something is wrong on the intranet, like a customer's phone number, she or he sends a note to the administrator or the contact person, who then updates the content. In a wiki, the task is much faster to accomplish, since the user can correct the error at once without anyone in-between.

The option to comment all wiki content is also an important linchpin, since the feature helps interaction. The commenting offers a way to motivate people to carry on their participation with special thanks, or to help a person develop things further with technical advice or questions related to the issue.

*– A wiki is more vivid than intranet solutions. It makes people themselves carry the ball, **Juha Pihlaja** from Ambientia explains.*

According to Ambientia, Juha Pihlaja was the very first wiki consultant in Finland. Ambientia hired him in January 2008.

There are many good ways to motivate people to participate in wikis. The first thing is to tell about the basic idea and the philosophy of the wiki, since it often differs greatly from the old means of content production and document archiving.

Ambientia evaluates that in most cases, it has implemented a wiki in organizations that have some sort of problem to solve. This way, the moti-

vation can be found already from the action itself, since the organization gets help with the problem after adopting the wiki.

Another issue is to ensure that the users know how to use the Internet and the wiki. Fortunately, even elderly people in organizations have begun to surf on the web, so the proportion of computer-illiterate users gets smaller day by day. Yet, it is something to take into account even in the western world.

If the organization is afraid that the use of wiki is too difficult, developers can facilitate the assimilation for example by using a similar user interface to the one the old intranet had. This way, the user interface feels immediately familiar. One should remember, though, that poor designs must not be reproduced no matter how familiar the designs are.

Since anyone can edit content in wikis if so wanted, the wiki tries to change the former audience into authors. It gives people the editor privileges firms were used to giving to their communication officers and project managers responsible for the dissemination.

Wiki consultant Juha Pihlaja has pointed out that communication departments are in fact the ones for whom the idea of a wiki can feel like a lump on one's throat.

According to Ambientia's experiences from the market, the communication managers and officers are sometimes afraid the staff will open up too much, and the openness will create conflicts or even slandering and tantalizing of others in the wiki.

For sure, it is not tempting to picture the management, team members, and other staff slandering each other, perhaps even the customers or other stakeholders. But really, how plausible is that? People use their own names in the enterprise wiki and they have a job to keep, so the anxiety and fear seem futile. Every contributor can also have their own personal page, whereto *the WikiSignature* leads readers who seek further information about the person (Leuf et Cunningham 2007, 125).

Perhaps these kinds of worries derive from the individuals' apprehen-

sion of the Internet in general; the trolls on the discussion forums and the overall image the traditional media has also spread of online being more about harassment, child porn and waste of time than being a useful place for doing grown-up things.

The severe challenge is the concept of openness that the wiki policy actually scoops its energy and power from. People do not necessarily fully understand the meaning of openness before it is time to really apply the openness in practice.

Change resistance occurs when the decision-makers begin to ponder whether they actually can or want to allow so wide rights for all the users. This problem can be handled in the specifications of the wiki, but it is also about the organization's culture.

The existing, potential and imagined threats of openness certainly need further studying after wikis become more widely used. Also, the user experiences are still rather unknown. Researchers ought to measure the advantages or disadvantages of wikis from this perspective.

After one has decided whether to adopt a wiki or not and which wiki is best suited, another challenge waits just around the corner. Thereon, the management needs to determine the scope of the wiki.

When one notices that a wiki could work for several other tasks as well, the manager and her development team have to evaluate whether to open another wiki or to modify the existing wiki to accomplish the new goal set as well.

If the wiki is very a task-oriented, the firm should probably open a new wiki for a different task. Also, when the target groups, the potential participants of the wiki, differ greatly or there are security issues to pay special attention to, a new wiki is a better choice than expanding the old one. (Leuf & Cunningham 2007, 135)

## – Podcasts

Podcasts are audio or video files that are published on the Internet and which can be subscribed to. The subscription feature makes a podcast a powerful form of social media. The subscription feature helps people to build audiences, communities around their shows.

The [wikiHow](#) estimates anyone could have a podcast online in some 5 to 10 minutes.

Podcasts already have their own directories, like [PodcastAlley](#), and marketing places like iTunes.

The following definition of a podcast is an excerpt from Wikipedia:

A *podcast* is a collection of [digital media](#) files which is distributed over the [Internet](#), often using [syndication feeds](#), for playback on [portable media players](#) and [personal computers](#). The term podcast, like “[radio](#)”, can refer either to the content itself or to the method by which it is syndicated; the latter is also termed *podcasting*. The [host](#) or [author](#) of a podcast is often called a *podcaster*.

The term “podcast” is a [portmanteau](#) of the words “[iPod](#)” and maybe “[broadcast](#)”, ([Wikipedia](#)).

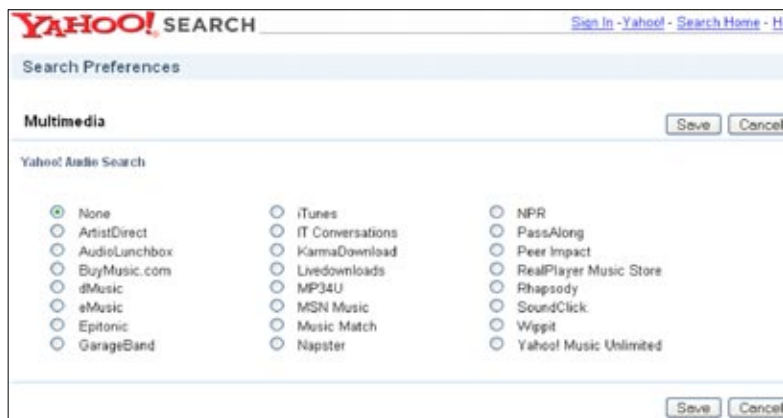


IMAGE 1 . [Yahoo!](#) Audio Search options to find podcasts in March 2008.



Apple's [iPod](#) was the portable media player for which the first podcasting scripts were developed (see [history of podcasting](#)). The scripts allowed podcasts to be automatically transferred to a mobile device after they are downloaded.

Podcasters offer direct [download](#) and [streaming](#), but also the option to syndicate and subscribe to. If one subscribes to a podcast feed, it works similarly to blog feeds. Once new content is published, it is automatically downloaded to the user's feed reader.

## Content sharing sites

Content sharing sites look a bit like social network sites – you have to register, have your own profile and you can make connections with friends. However, these sites are more focused on sharing a particular type of content than building the social network.

Typical content sharing sites are for example [Flickr](#), [YouTube](#), [del.icio.us](#), [digg](#) and [Dopplr](#).

Flickr helps people save photographs and discuss the images. YouTube shares videos, where as digg helps to share what is new on the web, like good blog posts, recent studies and articles written by journalists.

With del.icio.us, people can reach their own bookmarks (saved url addresses with descriptions added by the user) from wherever they have the Internet access. Dopplr lets people publish their travel plans.

These examples already show the content sharing sites genre is really wide, including all sorts of content from traditional journalism to bookmarks. Hopefully, further research helps us to define all the subgenres of this main social media type.

The content sharing site design usually helps participants to easily chop content into smaller pieces, microchunks. These pieces then can

spin around the net, which makes consumption easier and the chopped sources available from multiple locations.

The negative consequence is that the content streams assimilate, which is not just a boring experience, but in a worse case leads to a narrowed perspective towards world news, trends and cultures.

The model differs greatly from the traditional one where the broadcasting company tries to get everyone on their own channel and on their own website. The reason for this traditional design is probably that the business models are built in a way that relies on the users visiting *only* the company's web pages.

If people do not come to the site, what is the point of advertisements, like banners? None whatsoever.

When in traditional media, readers read, viewers watch and listeners listen, in social media, the so called user enjoys multiple roles which give greater authority to them.

Web designers and software architects build content sharing sites in a way that makes it possible for people not only to share content inside of the single site, but to take content with them as feeds to other locations, on other web sites.

There are even tools that help to combine separate content streams easily into one place, like [aggregators](#) and feed readers.

A content sharing site can be also [a mash-up](#), where the software integrates data from more multiple sources into a single site. [FlickrVision](#), [Twittervision](#) and [Spinvision](#) by David Troy are good examples of mash-up sites showing location-based information on a worldwide map.

Internet radios based on social media, like Pandora and Last FM, have changed the concept of listening to music. Whereas traditional radio stations broadcast a continuous stream of content which cannot be stopped and later listened to starting from the same spot, new radio concepts give people the right to listen to whatever they want whenever they want.

In addition, the faceless audience suddenly gets familiar, since listeners of the same kind of music are linked. Members of the network can discuss and comment on the music listened, and in Last FM, they are even able to publish small personal stories related to the songs.

In fact, the new digital music services have not just turned the Internet to a giant bookshelf full of records, but to a virtual space with pals who share the same music taste with you. It has never been easier to find music based on a friend's taste, since the sites show what the people in your social network listen to. Indeed, they do not even need to be your friends, just users of the same web service.

Linking to stuff other people have bought reflects the same recommendation culture we are so used to outside of the Internet, too. These kinds of passive recommendations, showing what one has bought, can be a sign of approval for another person to buy it as well, leading to increased music consumption.

When earlier consumers had to rely on professional opinion in the media and to the recommendations of their friends, now they can see "the album shelves" from almost whomever. iTunes combined with iLike features shows like-minded fans and guides the user to the similar kind of shopping paths as the referred users. The model is very similar to Amazon and helps to build up the so called long tail Chris Anderson (2006) has written about.

Personal profiles turn into market places for the musicians at the same time, as the music listening information perhaps enlightens some features of your identity to other people.

As if that were not enough to spell trouble for traditional radio stations broadcasting via the airwaves, podcasts take things even further.

With podcasts it is easy, at least technically, to begin your own show. From the listener's point of view, podcasts offer individual choice instead of a total station with perhaps lots of stuff that does not interest you at all.

With podcasts, people consume individual shows. So, what will be role

of the broadcast stations? That is a scary question for the radio stations that struggle with human labor and transmission equipment costs.

If the radio stations are not able to build nodes interesting enough to link to, most likely their labels will not appeal anymore.

It is perhaps needless to point out that TV channels have to face the change of the media environment, too. For example, MySpace is a social network site that has its own video series, like [Quarterlife](#).

The video series of MySpace also show how complicated it is to draw the fine lines between social media sites for content sharing and those which concentrate more on the networks.

We have faced this same challenge when defining the social media genres. Just take a look at sites that offer ways to annotate and bookmark online content. Parts of the people utilize these sites as containers for their content instead of sharing. The use is solely private and anti-social. Yet we claim these sites to be social media, based on what?

Mainly, on the amounts of publicly available content to anyone on these sites and on the semi-public sharing that happens in smaller, sometimes also in the more private groups of people.

If someone saves photos in Flickr because the hard drive would otherwise slow down, or takes bookmarks in del.icio.us just to be able to catch these important URLs wherever one has an Internet connection and a web browser to open, it is an additional feature that these social media sites offer. Still, these same sites are built for sharing.

For example, the del.icio.us design offers *Do not share* as an option, not as the primary and automatically selected feature. You have to click it every time you want your bookmark to be private. Otherwise, the bookmark is shown publicly to anyone visiting del.icio.us.

Some of the content sharing sites even have features that remind us of traditional broadcasting.

For example, YouTube shows on its front page *Videos being watched right now* and *Promoted videos* which all viewers see automatically and at

the same time. That is alike with television and radio broadcasting, where a specific stream of content is transmitted during a specific period of time for public or general use.

However, it is still more common that the social media tools allow for consuming the content whenever the user feels like it and has access to the site.

To summarize, in most of the content sharing sites, people have at least 5 ways to interact. They are able to:

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...❖ Create

...❖ Share

...❖ Evaluate

...❖ Socialize

...❖ Experience

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The last one, to experience, has been valuable asset for the entertainment industry for ages, too, so in this respect the list does not exclude the possibility that also traditional media could offer these actions. People immerse in stories. As readers get personal experiences out of well written novels and poems, the movies scare us, best ones make us even cry.

To raise emotions and give the experience to someone is relevant also in the social media though it is not necessarily the actual motivation or purpose of the producers themselves. Yet their participation can lead to emotions and private experiences felt by others.

For example, when one opens a YouTube video to listen the sound of icy trees and to see the frozen backyard of an unknown global neighbor living overseas, it is not necessarily a shared moment, but something experienced privately. The visitor may leave no comments. One just enjoys the scenery and sound before moving to new captive content.

So a bit like a poor man's version of the data-disc sales **Lenny Nero** made in the movie called *Strange Days*?

## Social network sites

Though all social media sites are based somewhat on people's will to collaborate, there are also some web sites that concentrate mainly on social networking or give the opportunity to spend time with the existing social network of a person.

These sites have profiles that may present the virtual reflection of not just individuals, but bands, causes, products, firms, groups of people, and even pets, like in the Facebook application [Dogbook](#) or on the Finnish social network site [Petsie](#).

For example, web services like [Facebook](#), [MySpace](#), [Orkut](#), [Bebo](#), [Skyrock](#) and [Trig](#) rely on personal networks and on the interaction between the members of these sites.

Social network sites typically offer either public or semi-public profiles for the users, but perhaps the biggest difference is that the profiles on the social network sites most likely show the list of people who the profile owner connects with, whereas content sharing sites would give more room for the content itself.

Boyd and Ellison ([2007](#)) have defined the social network sites (SNSs) as follows:

*-- web-based services that allow individuals to*

- (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system,*
- (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and*
- (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.*

*The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.*

In its simplest form, and in comparison to the old-fashioned personal address book, SNSs make it possible to watch which contacts the other

members of the service have on their social network, unless you are not signed in yet or the user has strict privacy settings leaving you out.

The shared data through the network has great advantages. When the profile owner updates her personal content on the profile, the owner of the social network this profile is part of only needs to recognize the change made.

In practice, this means that your five friends do not have to tap your phone number into their notebooks as long as they are part of your social network on the social network site. After you have updated your phone number to your profile, they immediately have it in use as well. Though not on their mobiles, but in best cases, as ready-made contact information that can be transferred from the social network site to several other virtual spaces as well, like in your e-mail address book.

On social media sites, people find you not just after typing your name into a search engine, but through your friends and through the content either you produce or the social software provides about you. The latter can include data that is available because of your own actions or because of other people's actions.

So here, *'the content'* is not just the digital files you create, publish and distribute or the social interaction documented, like your messages in the comment boxes and discussion chains. The definition also includes the traces you leave and which the systems automatically spread the information about.

What a huge change when compared to the early days of the Internet!

The earlier websites did not provide these kinds of choices. The sites were separate and not in the same systems. In fact, we argue that the social aspect was not taken care of in the way the social media solutions pay attention to nowadays, though social interaction certainly was the vivid force making the net thrive from the beginning.

In the early 1990s, those who knew how to encode with HTML perhaps had personal web sites but even with these earlier versions of 'the profile

pages', there was no easy technical system to help to make the network visible, other than coding the actual links from site to site to prove the connection with other people, or by opening up some sort of a guest book to show the nodes by presenting their messages to you.

However, no one saw those links unless they actually visited your site.

To comprehend the scale of the change, think about Facebook 'walls' and feeds that report what other users have done in the system.

The walls in Facebook are channels that are reminiscent of the past online guest books or information boards personal websites had. The difference is that if the owner of the wall has not set privacy too tight, anyone can see from his or her own profile a) who wrote to that specific person's wall, b) when did this happen and c) what was the actual message. Members of the network do not even have to change from her profile to a friend's profile to get access to this kind of information.

The so called news feed reports to me, on my own Facebook profile, that my friend Pasi just played Texas Hold'em Poker, Pauli and Laura are now friends and Janne became a fan of Jim Beam. I see which applications people add to their profiles and which causes they leave.

All this information is automatically produced according to the actions of my friends. They do not report this data themselves. It is something the social software aggregates to us, and, in many cases, prior to our friends even noticing it.

In addition, the profile owners can provide information about themselves intentionally. They publish content, like a video or images, on their profile or pick it up from the database of the social media site they use. After the content is selected, the user can share it with a personal upload to everyone's wall on their profile pages, through a specific application the network has adopted and even as an e-mail.

Social network sites differ not just by their size and members. The network sites also have sub genres according to the main features of the



user interface that manage the way users utilize these sites.

For example, LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)) is very business oriented. It shows not just the contacts your colleague has in total, but which of these contacts you share and which of the contacts your colleague added are totally new.

You do not search for friends and dates in LinkedIn, but business associates, future clients and subcontractors instead. For this, the web site even offers a service called *Introductions* that let you contact other users with the help of the network, through the people you know. The ways to communicate are to send *inMail* or to *ask and answer questions*. The topics of these discussions relate mostly to occupations and business, and there are no applications added for entertainment, or for anything else for that matter.

Another business networking tool is [XING](#). It differs from the American LinkedIn in the way people can group their contacts to ease the personal use of the contact data.

Whereas LinkedIn lists the names of your contacts and offers data based on the information people give about themselves, XING users are also able to tag their contacts with key words, tags, which no one else sees. This way, one can categorize the contact list and even make some small reminders of the people to help to remember essential details about that specific contact.

Social network sites like Facebook are mostly for communication with people we know. Facebook users publish their profiles with their own names. They adjust the privacy settings of the site to manage what part of all the information the site gathers about them they show to the public, either automatically or because the user has created some content on the site.

One can add photos, videos, and all sorts of feeds to the profile of a social network site to visualize the personality. In Facebook, the interaction happens either through the applications, inbox or walls. There

are also groups, networks, events and causes people can join and invite others to. They can even create these nodes of networks by themselves if they like.

Facebookers also publish their personal news on the status updates which tell, for example, the location of the profile owner, the mood the person has, the latest experiences or coming occasions, or show requests like short questions or asking for some fun or for help, either online or outside of the Internet.

The status update in Facebook is a minor text field that for a long time had an obligatory form with the user's first name and the verb "is". After participants pressured Facebook, the designers took the obligatory verb away. As this report was written, only the first name came automatically in front of each of the status updates. Otherwise, the content was totally changeable. The status update is very similar, for example, to Skype's "mood" or to microblogging.

Facebook also has a feature called mini-feed. This reports everything anyone does in public.

## **Collaborative productions**

Collaborative productions contain content that is made collaboratively by collectives who have a joint goal and motivation to participate in order to achieve that goal. The production process may have several hierarchical phases resembling a conventional media production.

Sometimes, the projects even mix forms of collaborative media production into conventional media.

The basic idea is that people do not just send independent content files, but work on the same task to make a bigger combination that will be the sum of the content chunks.

Typical examples are [OhmyNews](#) in Korea: [Blufton Today](#) in USA and

[Star Wreck](#) and the Iron Sky projects in Finland. The collaborative productions have also reached games, as [Apricot Game Project](#) shows.

Wikipedia is surely a collaborative production, though it also belongs to content creation and publishing tools. In this respect, our genre list is far from perfect. However, we want to make the distinction.

For example, large projects like Wikipedia bridge nations to produce commons for all. It was started as a production that aimed at collaboration from the beginning, now producing collective social capital for free. The nature of it is different than that of a plain wiki tool, though drawing the line is a bit teetering.

Since Star Wreck's case is told in depth later in this report, we will not describe the nature of the collaborative productions genre more in this chapter.

## Virtual worlds

In this subgenre, the emphasis is on services that offer developed environments (3D or others) and tools for the users to act in those environments in various ways. It can be a [Second Life](#) kind of virtual environment, using avatars and built mainly for adults, or a [Habbo Hotel](#) type of world for children to play and build, or it can be a game developed with other players like [World of Warcraft](#).

The difference to some other genres is that the user emphasis is mostly on experiences, enjoyment, excitement and only secondly on, for example, socializing, content publishing or network building.

Second Life is an especially interesting case in the field of social media, as it has given the intellectual property rights to the users (or creators) which, at least in theory, should add to the productivity of the participants.

All in all, in the game industry the spheres of culture (active players

collaborating) and commercial interests (the developers working in the firms) have been intertwined for some time.

It is interesting to see whether the same kind of process as seen in the game development should take place in social media too.

Olli Sotamaa (2007) sees that players in the game industry hold a particular kind of power.

*While this power is restricted and different from that of the developers, the enthusiastic participation of players has potential for either completing or ruining the plans of corporate actors. (Sotamaa 2007, 398)*

This is something that is becoming evident when the life span of social media services is turning out to be – in some cases – rather short. Who remembers the former community hit Geocities? The *producers* or user-producers can vote very efficiently with their mice.

## **Add-ons**

The new trend in web design is to design something for the ready-made community of another site. Just think about the way Facebook has opened its interface for other firms to bring in new applications. Sometimes, the application related to the social network site can work well on its own, too, like Photobucket and iLike, which are also content sharing sites on their own, but yet many of the applications would not be as successful unless they stuck with the existing social media communities.

Add-ons provide direct access to the data contained in these applications. End-user applications that are based on open interfaces help social media users, for instance, to login, get data, and post new content or changes on the data that already exists.

When one wants to spread the visibility of a site, a content or a brand

as wide as possible, that can be done in most cases with the smartly designed applications that stick to popular platforms, like Facebook, or as widgets to individual's social media sites, like blogs.

The applications at their best function almost as features designed for the master web sites.

The difference is that the owner of each of the master sites did not design the feature, nor did any of their subcontractors, like the normal case would be in the traditional web production projects. Instead, an external developer adds the feature; the application.

The owner of the master site may not pay for the application. The owner might not even know the actual developers; whether they are trustworthy or not or whether they know how to design an attractive hit.

Even 'the order' for applications can be pretty much a general one on the master web site. It is more about opening up the interface than making an actual order for a specific application, like in the Facebook case.

Nothing naturally inhibits the owner of the master web site from making such an order, but in most cases, the developers either make the application at their own risk or for a third party customer that pays for the work.

The idea of add-ons is rather similar to feeds that ease content distribution outside of one's own web site, and, on the other hand, help to aggregate new innovative combinations to one's site. Both designs spread the message as wide as possible and/or gather the content either for publishing purposes or for private use.

Application programming interface (API) developer's strategy is to gain as much information about the users as possible to support, for example, business or research. For the individual using the same API, the goal can be just to spend some time, have fun or to compare oneself to others out of curiosity.

For example, iLike owners collaborate with iTunes and social net-

working sites like Facebook and Bebo to show whoever you want what you are listening to.

With applications like iLike, your music consumption becomes a part of your web profile. You may even dedicate special songs to your friends on their profiles, and others can see these dedications unless you made the dedication privately.

In the case of iLike, the consumption of a single service actually sticks with at least four different services.

First of all, there is the Facebook application iLike. It shows on your profile what you have lately listened to, which artists you fancy and whether you are going to a concert or have dedicated some songs to your friends. The application updates the music data from iTunes, users fill in the rest.

Secondly, the same application aggregates videos from YouTube according to the list you have lately listened to.

Thirdly, iLike also works as an independent site.

The fourth dimension is the iLike banner in iTunes, showing free downloads and related music you might like according to your music data. It also shows what music your friends using iLike have listened to, to support social shopping. iLike even publishes information from the Facebook account, showing, for example, whether there are new messages in the Inbox of Facebook.

As you can see, the production and distribution differs greatly from the traditional model, where the owner of the site locks up all content and wants everyone to join that specific site.

The application developers receive user data either as a straight input from the users, or as an output from the database of the master platform(s) the API users already utilize, and to which they have handed over information about themselves.

This is the major difference when compared to feeds. Feeds do not collect additional information about the users, since they represent the

push channels for content rather than active components which gather, publish and spread data or even potter about the social networks.

The feeds neither offer a medium in themselves to continue discussion or modify the content. Users have to do this afterwards and with another tool.

Perhaps the most well-known open interface application is the Google Maps that Google offers. Developers can integrate the maps into their web sites and then enhance the maps with additional information.

From the social network sites, Facebook is rather unique, since it has thousands of applications from external developers.

For example, the Friend Wheel visualizes which of the user's friends link to each other as a circle graph. Student Thomas Fletcher at the University of Bath designed the application. He launched the service in May 2007, and after four months, already 365,000 users had added it to their profiles to see the visualization of their social network ([Fletcher 2007](#)).

Also, Amazon, a Fortune 500 company, has recognized Facebook as a useful channel to connect with present and potential new customers. In March 2008, it launched two applications, called Amazon Giver and Amazon Grapevine on the Facebook platform ([Amazon 2008](#)).

With the Grapevine application, Amazon is able to disseminate information about the user-written reviews and product tags. The members of the same network see in their News Feed what others have updated lately on Amazon.

When Facebook users add the Amazon Giver application, they can check and purchase products similar to those their friends have listed on the Amazon Wish Lists, as well as to find out the recent public activity of their pals on Amazon. This way, the wish list turns into a shopping list for friends who are wondering what to buy as a gift for their best buddies.

Both Amazon Giver and Amazon Grapevine shorten up the way from user to Amazon, since users do not need to change the site to see the relevant news from the other site. The applications have privacy settings,

so people do not need to offer all information publicly.

That was a lesson well learnt already after the Facebook beacon disaster in 2007.

The Facebook Beacon shared information about the purchases with online friends every time the users forgot to note that the purchase was private information. Beacon still tracks users' actions on sites other than Facebook, but the privacy settings work nowadays better. (Story 2007)

Though Facebook gets new features and additional content for free with the help of third party add-ons, there is still a major risk in this kind of open web development model.

Not all of the applications meet the quality standards, nor do they honor privacy. Users of the applications get frustrated with the spamming some of the applications or the friends adding these applications cause. Since the developer can be anyone, a private person or a firm, from anywhere in the world, it is not too safe to add applications, as you do not know exactly what the application in fact does, and which personal information it is able to take with it from the actual user profile and the content the account contains.

The developers of APIs and their goals are often obscure. In most cases, no one actually knows the amount or profundity of the data suction these 3rd party applications are able to carry out from the existing content users have saved about themselves, or that which the master web site has accumulated since the user registered on the site.

For the API developers, the risk is that the master site owner shuts the application down and even perhaps kicks the developer out of the community.

This might encourage at least some to avoid violation against the master site's developer rules and policies, which are the only quality control at hand in addition to the community's own control when deciding whether to add the application, forward it to friends, too, or to block it totally and later blog about it.



Another developer risk is that the master site itself might close or change the requirements of the interface and of the applications.

The latter takes extra work hours from the software programmers that update the design to meet the new policy, whereas the first one could be lethal if the application works solely on the master site and not independently anywhere else; either on another master site or a stand-alone site.

The third risk for developers, or perhaps it is more of a challenge than a risk, is to tackle the master site's interface and the actual design, which always limit design and some of the features applications can in fact have. Then there are also policies and rules that limit the action the application may implement.

In Facebook, the application is, for example, not allowed to advertise since that is Facebook's business. In GoogleMaps, Google retains the right to add ads on the maps if the firm sees it fruitful some day.

To summarize, we have included add-ons as a media type and one of the actual main genres of social media. The reason for this is that the applications most often have another original developer and owner than the master web site, so they are not mere features or 'just parts of the site'. The applications can even have their own sub-communities and audiences, created with membership profiles, which make an interface application for sure a medium for people.

# 5.

## Brief history of social media in Finland

Today, the Internet in Finland looks rather different when compared to the time we prepared the Parteco project. In fact, in the beginning of 2006, it was not common for companies to talk about social media, since the whole term was rather unknown (Melakoski & al 2007).

We have collected together some of the milestones – important companies, processes and media debates – in this chapter. This is of course a very tentative and subjective compilation, but it hopefully shows that there have been a lot of activities going on, already before the whole social media as a concept started.

The origins of Finnish social media practices can be traced back to the 70's. The technology development projects, like Linux mostly linked to **Linus Torvalds** and the IRC chat and chatrooms **Jarkko Oikarinen** had his hands on, were the early trend setters for the online social collaboration and communication practices in Finland that the Finnish digital media productions and finally the websites nowadays known as social media followed.

It is safe to say web sites had their place in Finland from the very beginning, even though CD-ROM productions were the actual base for the

digital media industry at first. Even though DVD and DVD-ROM were thought to take over, web productions continued their felicitous path. For example, in the Finnish digital media competition [MindTrek](#), half of the winners have always been web productions, and almost 60 percent of all entries produced for net use.

After the technology comparison of all MindTrek competition entries, the web still shines. The most entries, 34 %, have HTML design, whereas Director was the secondly preferred production tool, with a share of 15 %, Flash coming right behind with 12 per cent. The statistics are from the years 1997 to 2005, when production could also be divided into 4 main categories; entertainment, art and culture, marketing, and e-learning. (Pelkonen & Vehmasaho 2006)

Back then, Finland had no global success stories on the Internet business, even though the professionals were highly skilled, had innovative ideas and the World Wide Web was ‘worldwide’.

Certainly, the language was one barrier, but so was the broadband. Mostly only universities had broadband, and others settled for the ISDN connection’s bandwidth of 128 kbps. (Pelkonen & Vehmasaho 2006) That narrowed down possibilities the web sites could offer, as well as the amount of Internet users, which limited the potential market.

## First industry players

From the major digital media firms probably the most known were **Interactive Satama**, **Everscreen Mediateam**, **To The Point**, **Tietovalta**, **Sansibar**, and **The Works Finland**. (Pelkonen & Vehmasaho 2006) From these, only Satama is still kicking. The acquisitions of other firms have perhaps been one reason for its survival.

The so called eBusiness began to grow at the end of 1996, when firms realized they want to buy a homepage. The sites had only few if no features

to support social interaction. To publish messages on a site not owned by yourself, you had to send your message with simple e-forms, which, especially on the business sites, did not get published immediately, like the comments in the blogs or messages people send to their friend's wall on Facebook might nowadays be.

Indeed, if people wanted to have personal home pages, they needed to know how to code and use FTP programs, or to have a cousin or friend who knew how to do it if they themselves had no technical skills. The personal website was practically for a long time the only way to build up your virtual identity, in addition to being recognized by always using the same nickname in discussion forums and IRC channels.

Most if not all of the early web sites were units that linked to other sources but did not automatically show the content from external sites. The model differed greatly from the way the present social media sites function.

The new features give site owners the opportunity to benefit from external sources with the use of feeds and integrated media players, like the YouTube video player, that just were not available in the 1990s.

## The first forms of social media

Without going too deep into the prehistory of social media in Finland, we want to introduce some important Finnish cases that have an important role in the social media field.

In 1989, the HPY Elisa discussion board was perhaps one of the first public sites available in Finland that could be defined as a virtual community ([Holopainen 2005](#)) and as social media.

**Nicehouse.** Even the websites based on social interaction, like the discussion forum [Nicehouse](#) by [Nicefactory](#), provided only discussion threads, but did not necessarily link the discussions to a person system-

atically. Instead of profiling people, sites concentrated on categorizing the content. Signing up was a thing to do in order to get in, not a way to transform people into nodes of an existing network.

Nicehouse has 20 000 unique users weekly. The users still have no profile pages. If they want to be known members of the service, they need to write their nick name which will then show along each message. For those who sign in, their nick name shows automatically, others need to write their names down every time they want to start a discussion or comment to an existing thread of messages.

The site was exceptional since it has always been more interesting to women than men. In 2006, 95 % of its users were female and the majority of visitors was 35 years or older.

**Sooda.** After Nicehouse, **Hanna Puro** and **Eppie Eloranta** also designed another interesting Internet brand called [Sooda](#). Sooda.com by [Zento Interactive Ltd](#) relied on media convergence with a concept that combined an online community with printed side commodities, like a school calendar teenagers could tune with their own content.

Sooda won the EuroPrix prize in 2001, but the success in the global market has remained rather small. The site has some 50 000 unique visitors per month. According to the 15/30 Research survey results, 97 % of them are girls, and as many as 68 % of the users are kids at the age of 10 to 14.

**Duuni.net.** The net community Duuni.net (1996–2003) was a pioneer social network site in Finland. The site had 20 000 users in 2000, which was the golden year for it. Duuni.net members had so called virtual business cards including an image of the member, personal information, the day when the member joined in and links to the discussion history. The developers of the site, **Kim Weckström**, **Jussi Lystimäki**, **Johanna Sarviharju** and **Johanna Pirttimäki**, all came from the new media department of Talentum.

When Talentum founded Satama Interactive, the site moved to Sata-ma and later to WOW-verkkobrandit Ltd, a joint venture of Talentum and

Tele, a telecommunication company that was afterwards known as Sonera and nowadays carries the brand TeliaSonera. ([Wikipedia](#))

The joint venture was short. Already in 2000, Sonera sold WOW, including Duuni.net, to Talentum and bought the Finnish search engine www.fi, Virtahepo and a dating forum called Sinkut.net. ([Salin 2000](#)). The firm was earnest on concentrating on online consumer site development that would support Sonera Plaza, one of the biggest and first social media sites in Finland, in keeping its participants from the beginning. Duuni.net was again in Talentum's portfolio, in addition with the WOW! news.

Talentum got a 2 million euro positive net effect on its cash flow with the arrangements. However, Duuni.net did not provide profits. In 2003, Duuni.net changed its name to Talentum.net and all open discussion areas were closed, which forced users to find new forums, like Tuuni.net by **Auvo Severiakangas** ([Holopainen 2005](#)).

In 2003, Talentum closed Duuni.net ([Poropudas 2003](#)). Some of the active members of the site, like **Petja Jäppinen**, started discussions again on Aulabaari.net ([Holopainen 2005](#)).

**Adressit.com**. In 2004, **Samppa Rehu** came up with the idea of an easy online tool to publish addresses when his friend and friend's father pondered how they could make a civic address to direct attention to banning anti-personnel mines. The address never came out, but the idea remained. In 2005, Rehu coded the site, but only had time to inform about it in a couple of discussion forums. The site remained silent. (Rehu 2008)

In February 2006, **Denis Oksanen** found the site and built the first address that was not just for testing the site. The topic was "*Selling snuff legal in Finland*". Snuff users promoted the address among their networks and in a few days, a couple thousand people signed the address. In May during the same year, **Kirsi Auranen** asked people to sign the address for tougher punishments for cruelty to animals, and in 10 days, she already got some 30 000 signatures. (Rehu 2008)

The site received major success after one of its users, the user with the nickname **Iksu69**, reacted on the national tabloid news that revealed the face of **Tommi Putaansuu**, also known as the singer of the band [Lordi](#). (Rehu 2008)

Lordi is a Finnish band with artists who do not show their real faces, but wear monster masks. The band was well known after it won Eurovision Contest with the song [Hard Rock Hallelujah](#) in 2006. Lordi had passionate fans who wanted to keep the faces of the artists secret, since that had been also the wish of Putaansuu and other members of the band.

However, in May 24 the tabloid called *7 Päivää* (7 days) published how Tommi Putaansuu looks in real life without his mask. Iksu69 opened an address that demanded people to boycott the tabloid *7 Päivää*, because the tabloid did not respect the request of the band for its right to show in public only with the monster style.

In three days, some two hundred thousand people signed the address. The address, as well as the web site for making addresses online, aspired the headlines of the traditional media for a few days because of the episode. (Rehu 2008)

On Adressit.com, people open up from 100 to 300 new addresses per month and there are already about 5 000 addresses with different themes; some of those are more serious, others just for the fun of it. (Rehu 2008)

In the beginning of 2008, the website Adressit.com met the breaking point of 2 million signings in total. Most of the visitors come through community sites, forums and blogs instead of search engines. So far, the site has been national, but Samppa Rehu plans to take the platform on the international markets, too. (Rehu 2008)

The business of the site is based on advertisements.

**Suomi24**. Discussion forums like [Suomi24](#) are still a success. In February 2008, Suomi24 contained a massive amount of discussions, with a total of 34.633.000 messages on its discussion threads. It was also the

most popular chat in Finland and had its dating service going strong.

During the years, Suomi24 has turned into a media service with its own Suomi24 Shop, free e-mail system, mobile service, channels about cars, games, health and traveling, YouTube videos, daily horoscopes, e-cards etc.

The Suomi24 community members have their own profiles in ‘galleria’ (“the gallery” in English) which is a rather typical example of a personal page. The digital identity is presented with an image of the person, a description text and the list of things that define ‘the personality’ like *If I won a million, On my day-off I, I prefer to go to movies to see*. A member of the gallery can add his or her favorite links on the profile page for others to enjoy, too.

To support social networking, or at least to show that the site is active, Suomi24 lists 10 nick names of the users who have last visited the member’s profile page. With the features that show when the membership began, what was the last time the person signed in and which are the last messages she or he has written, the site automatically builds up some sort of a personal history and background for the community member.

**Sulake.** The biggest Finnish market hit on the global markets was Habbo Hotel, owned by Sulake Ltd. In those days, Sulake could not promote the service with their own enterprise blog. There just were no blogs yet, so dissemination and marketing went through other channels.

The co-founders of Habbo Hotel, **Sampo Karjalainen** and **Aapo Kyrölä**, knew each other from work. The young men had both worked in To The Point and were Satama’s staff in year 2000, when they got the idea to make a virtual space for the Mobiles band and its fans to interact. The new media experts in Finland got excited about the site Kyrölä and Karjalainen had started as a hobby. Foreigners also found it appealing, which then made it necessary to translate the site into English, too.

**Jussi Nurmio**, the CEO of the advertising agency Taivas, wanted to found a company to develop the concept further. Karjalainen and Kyrölä



thought it was a good idea and jumped in. The first customer was the national telecommunication company Elisa. It wanted to add to the virtual space on its site. That helped the start for Sulake Labs and for Habbo Hotel. ([Muukkonen 2005](#))

In 3 years from the beginning of the company, the global venture capital and private equity firm 3i Group evaluated Habbo to have a market value of 15 million euros. Karjalainen and Kyrölä were millionaires under the age of 30. ([Muukkonen 2005](#)).

Nowadays, 3i is one of the owners of Habbo Hotel. The site is the largest online virtual worlds for teens including virtual chat spaces, and makes money on selling synthetic products, like virtual furniture for the Habbo rooms the teens like to decorate. Habbo has 80 million created characters and 6 million unique users. The design is localized for 31 countries and country sites are available across 5 continents. According to the firm, page views in Habbo per month average at 4 billion. ([Sulake 2007](#)).

The growth has been rather rapid. In 2004, the site had ‘only’ 17 million characters, 11 country sites and 2,3 million users ([Sulake 2004](#)).

This year, Sulake ([2008](#)) announced it has made a licensing agreement with Paramount Pictures Digital Entertainment. It will create virtual goods for the brands The Spiderwick Chronicles, Beowulf and Mean Girls. The deal covered merchandising rights throughout the U.S. and Canada for these labels. According to Sulake, this kind of partnership was one of the first between major motion picture studios and a virtual world commodity.

In 2008 Sulake was evaluated as being the ninth most valuable start-up company in the world within the field of digital media. [Silicon Valley Insider](#) blog estimated the value of Habbo Hotel being 1,25 billion dollars when for example the value of Linden Lab was slightly smaller, 1,1 billion. Facebook was listed as the most valuable with 9 billion and Wikipedia was second on the list with 7 billion. ([Moisio 2008](#)). One should of course remember that these values are only rough estimations based on market

information not on real prices paid on the market.

**IRC-Galleria.** The first Finnish merger in the field of social media took place in April 2007 when Sulake, the company behind the successful Habbo Hotel, bought IRC-Galleria from Dynamoid Ltd. During the week 18/2008 IRC-Galleria had 815 000 weekly visitors, which makes it the 9th most popular site in Finland. It has nearly as much unique users as the website of Helsingin Sanomat, the biggest national newspaper in the country, which was on the 7th place according the TSN Metrix counting. In terms of weekly visits, IRC-Galleria is apparently bigger than any other in the Nordic countries. It has 40 million page loads per week. ([Kauppinen 2007](#))

**Tomi Lintelä** (Shalafi) and **Jari Jaanto** (Jaffa) formed IRC-Galleria in December 2000. They were both active users of IRC: the text-based, worldwide, real-time chat system. The guys wanted to add an elementary feature missing from IRC: People should see each other, not just the messages. The original site showed twenty pictures of friends of Lintelä and Jaanto. In one year from that, the site already had five thousand registered users and the team expanded with two more members: **Kari Lavikka** and **Matti Kari**. (Tikka 2008)

Co-operation with the Finnish IRC and Internet Users Association FIIU began in 2001 to cover the expenses. The association funded the site with its membership fees. New revenue streams were yet needed. In the beginning of 2002, White Rabbit Ltd was signed to help selling advertisements on the site. It seemed to be a good time to found a company, and so the core team in addition with **Heini Varjonen** and **Teddy Grenman** established Dynamoid Ltd. (Tikka 2008)

Dynamoid got its first office in June 2005. The limit of 100 000 registered users was broken in September 2004 and 200 000 in June 2005. This amount doubled in less than two years, as the site had 400 000 users. IRC-Galleria covers some 70–80 percent of 15 to 20 year old Finns using the site. This makes it the biggest youth media in Finland, so no

wonder the large companies, like Pepsi, Coca-Cola, McDonalds, Nokia and Finnish mobile operators, already advertise regularly on IRC-Galleria. (Tikka 2008)

The present owner Sulake intends do with IRC-Galleria what they have been able to do with Habbo: to take it into global markets. IRC-Galleria began in Finnish, but nowadays it already has a market share in Russia and Germany, too (Kauppinen 2007).

## Wikis get noticed

The Finnish version of Wikipedia was founded already in February 21, 2002, but the year 2002 was quite modest if measured by the amount of articles: just a little over ten pieces. The people started creating and editing Wikipedia articles more seriously in 2003, when around 50 new articles were published per month. During the summer of 2003, there were already more than a thousand articles in the Finnish Wikipedia. (Wikipedia)

In 2003–2004, Nokia adopted the first wikis in its organization.

## Blogging begins

One of the crucial centers for the development of Finnish blogosphere has been **Sami Köykkä**'s blog Pinsiiri and Blogihakemisto, founded in 2002. (Majava 2006)

One of the first cases in which Finnish bloggers were able to beat the Finnish Foreign Ministry as well as the whole mainstream media in Finland was during the *Tsunami* catastrophe in December 2004.

The diver site [www.sukellus.fi](http://www.sukellus.fi) was able to inform about the fates of Finnish tourists in Indonesia much faster than the Foreign Ministry of-

ficials and the mainstream media after the fatal tsunami. During the first days of the catastrophe, the Finnish media depended solely on the slow and ineffective official information which caused a lot of criticism among the Finnish audience.

The diver site was given lots of credit and the State Award for Public Information by the Committee for Public Information in 2005.

A Finnish online magazine, Digitoday, had categorized blogs as one of the most known phenomena of social media already years ago. The news article also mentioned wikis as something that came before blogs and is part of social media (Flink 2004).

[Blogilista](#), which lists Finnish blogs, but naturally does not cover all, had 1 985 blogs in June 2005 and 3 016 blogs in October during the same year. Approximately 76 per cent of these blogs were active, which means someone had written on the blog during the past 3 months. Half of the blogs, 1 550 blogs, had updates during the last 7 days. Vuodatus.net is a Finnish site offering blog space and tools. It had 2 059 blogs in 2005, out of which only half, 1 091 blogs were active. ([Köykkä 2005](#))

There has been debate on whether Finland had 170,000 blogs in 2005 or 60,000 to 150,000 blogs in 2006 like Lintulahti ([2005](#), [2006](#)) evaluated. When compared to the estimation, that there were over 900 blogs in Finland in 2004 ([Flink 2004](#)), there is a huge gap that shows how difficult it is to measure the amount of blogs or how massive the growth has been.

However, some sign of the bloggers success perhaps is that the first blog was officially sponsored in the spring of 2006, when PimpMyLaptop promised to offer free space and connections for Schizoblog ([Karvonen 2006](#)), and that made news.

## Going to YouTube

[Antti Paajoki's video](#) (Paajoki 2006) about an accident on Independence Day became national news after he published the video on YouTube. The video shows a parade in Jyväskylä where an 87-year-old veteran suddenly walked under a tank and died ([Ilta-Sanomat 2006](#)).

Media used images of the video to tell about the accident. Paajoki himself did not offer the video to any media house, but the information about the video spread fast through e-mails and discussion forums with the link to YouTube (Paajoki 2006). The army published no news about the accident on its web site though they promoted the parade otherwise.

Two tabloids and one national television channel contacted Paajoki about the video, and with one of them, Paajoki negotiated about remuneration. The negotiations finished before any agreements.

Nowadays, it is typical that different websites copy and distribute the same content over and over again. For example, Paajoki's video on YouTube was also aggregated on the web sites like [herq.fi](#) and [Naurunappula.com](#) (Finnish sites) and on Meie.TV, BestofYT.com, DVideos.com from other countries. All these sites have in common that they use the video from YouTube to offer content for their own audiences.

The Finnish NMKY comedy version of the world famous song called Y.M.C.A. was a social media star for a while. 28 years later, it was the international video hit of the day according to Viral Video Chart, that listed it the most linked video in the world. Viral Video Chart combines statistics from YouTube, MySpace and Google Video.

**YouTube** made headlines with a much worse case when an 18-year-old student shot the **Jokela massacre video** for YouTube, where he also stated on his YouTube profile "*I am prepared to fight and die for my cause --*".

After getting the Jokela High School Massacre 11/07/2007 video out, the young man went to his school to shoot people. He killed 9 people in

November 2007: 5 boys and 3 women in addition to himself. One of the victims was the principal of the school. In addition, 12 people were injured and had to be taken to hospital or health center.

Before YouTube closed the account of the murderer, the video was watched about 200 000 times.



**IMAGE 3.** The YouTube profile warning about Jokela massacre. 2007.

The users of the MuroBBS discussion/publishing site users were faster than traditional media in publishing the news about Jokela shootings.

The first post came at 11.53 saying that there has been a shooting at Jokela school. This was before the police arrived at the school and before the traditional media woke up to follow the incident.

The MuroBBS community was able to find the name of the shooter and his family before the official media. Here is the first post about the shootings by user called *Nicleleon*:

7.11.07 11:53 *Nicleleon*  
*Jokelan yhteiskoulussa ammuskeltiin.*  
*Jokelan yhteiskoulussa ammuskeltiin.*

Dagens Nyheter and Aftonbladet in Sweden published news about the Jokela massacre. So did the international news agencies like AFP, AP and Reuters. There were discussions on how the net should or could be tracked to get ahead of the persons planning disasters like the one that happened in Finland.

Blogger Ryan Singel (2007) wrote on Wired how a YouTube user known as TheAmazingAtheist had called for the police to investigate the Finnish student because of the video posts admiring the Columbine shooters. This was before he committed his crime. No one reacted and results are those we unfortunately now know. Jokela's YouTube case spread rapidly as an example for other young copycats.

Videos seemed to be hot stuff. Finnish web development firms started to build up national video communities. [Kotitieto](#) offered 128 000 people their Finnish net-TV concentrating on issues relevant for homes and families. The site also has videos from users themselves.

In 2007, Kai Lemmetty and Joonas Pekkanen decided that anyone should be able to have their own TV channel and founded Floobs for that. In the beginning of 2008, Floobs beta opened and Helsingin Sanomat listed the firm as one of the fast growing firms in Finland ([Helsingin Sanomat 2008](#)). The media coverage was rather fast, too, since the newspaper also noted that the site was yet in a testing phase and the firm had no revenues ([Alkio 2008](#)).

## Jaiku

Year 2006 was the beginning of an exceptional Finnish social media success story. It all started in **Marko Ahtisaari's** studio in Helsinki, where **Jyri Engeström** played with some ideas together with his friends. From these ideas grew first [Jaiku](#) and later [Dopplr](#).

Jaiku is a mobile and web service through which the user can microblog what he or she is doing, feeling and planning, whereas Dopplr is a site for people who travel a lot and want to tell others where they travel in order to arrange meets with people more efficiently.

Jaiku's development did not take too much time. Jyri Engeström continued to develop the idea of a microblogging site further after he found **Petteri Koponen**, with whom they started to experiment with Flash on what the service could look like.

Engeström had been working for [Nokia](#), blogging and was in the middle of his dissertation studies in Lancaster. Koponen already had experience from one venture capitalist round, references of a successful exit and according to Engeström, Koponen was also more technology-oriented than himself. Engeström had earlier participated in the founding of the one the first Finnish Internet Consulting firms called To The Point. The young man had also worked long for Satama before moving to Nokia Ventures. So the background information was already in order. Engeström also understands the value of visibility.

*– It is good to start in pairs if you both have different kinds of strengths. You also need to have strong international social networks with relevant advisors. We had Joychi Ito and others. In addition, hire a good PR agency to raise your firm's visibility, and remember not just to speak in conferences, but to go skiing afterwards so that others get to know you, Engeström summarizes.*

**Joychi “Joi” Ito** has made investments in sites like Technorati, SocialText and flickr, so the advisor was no minor player.

Jaiku was released in July 2006. Google and Skype contacted Engeström on the same week they published the beta version. The service was free for its users from the very beginning, which is typical for social media sites in general as well.



Some say Jaiku had no business model, but the firm was, however, able to gain some revenue with operator deals and on the advertisements Jaiku could distribute.

In October 2007, Google bought the company. The acquisition happened only a year after the company Jaiku Ltd was founded.

*– We were able to connect to something everyone else already pondered, Engeström, the co-founder of Jaiku and the present expert working for Google smiles.*

*– Though Twitter was released before us, I guess it turned out to be a good thing since journalists wanted to show a competitor and so Jaiku was mentioned. That is important for a firm, to be the referral since there are so many firms trying to catch markets, too, he added.*

Engeström truly was a spokesman for his firm. He visited 2 to 3 conferences a week and got in **Tim O'Reilly's** conferences that were sort of labeling the whole industry with the Web 2.0 sticker. According to Engeström, being open is the way to promote and develop one's ideas.

*– I am not sure how good it is to be as open as I was, but I love to discuss ideas. It is guaranteed that someone will come to talk if he has done something similar since it is so intriguing. They get excited about the vision.*

There is no public information on how big the Jaiku deal was. One social media entrepreneur said that Jaiku case is the best showcase on how excellent social networks made business possible.

Finnish-made social media sites have kept popping up. In 2008, there were approximately 20 to 30 companies that could be listed as social media start-ups. There are firms like [Apprix](#), [Connected Day](#), [Dopplr](#), [Floobs](#), [Fruugo](#), [Muxlim](#), [Scred](#), [Star Wreck Studios](#), [MoiPal](#) by IronSky Helsinki,

[Petsie](#) by Ideawire, [RunToShop](#), [MySites](#) and [TripSay](#).

The list could be added with The Web of Trust, in short [WOT](#) by Against Intuition or [Whatamap.com](#). In addition, there are [24days](#) and [Waraamo](#) by Gemilo, [Wosbee](#) by Smilehouse, and the multilingual social network called [Xiha Life](#). [Zipipop](#) has the Friends Pad Facebook application and for food, there are sites like [Eat.fi](#), [Kebabille.com](#) and [Pizza-online.fi](#).

Some of these firms may be the future “Jaikus”. There are also several other companies and sites not listed here, but which are certainly upcoming and hunting for the success as well.

## Unappropriate messages

As the popularity of social media grew, the debates about copyright followed in 2005.

National prosecutor **Mika Illman** got attention when he talked about having obligatory moderators on discussion forums to delete inappropriate messages ([Helsingin Sanomat 2007](#)).

If moderators were missing, the forum owner could have been punished. However, according to the law, the website publisher is responsible for the content only if she or he edits it somehow. Some people and firms that publish online were not happy about Illman’s thoughts.

Later in **Kari Haakana’s** blog ([Haakana 2007](#)), Illman adjusted his opinion and wrote that he had only referred to the need for moderating afterwards.

Prime Minister **Matti Vanhanen** dated with **Susan Kuronen**, who after the break, in 2007, told her story to the nation with the book Prime Minister’s Bride. She got huge publicity on the media, but the book did not sell well. After Kuronen received negative slander on the net, she wanted to know who harassed her in the online discussion groups and asked police to find out who were behind the offensive comments.

In April, media published the police was beginning to search who were the offensive writers on the web. In May 2007, the yellow tabloid *Ilta-Sanomat* wrote that the police managed to find out the information about the users.

The Susan Kuronen case is interesting also in the way the citizens were able to express their frustration by signing an online cause [Susan Kuronen – lopeta se avautuminen](#) (in English, Susan Kuronen – Stop opening up). The address had 64 804 names signed by different people (Parteco, February 2008).

In 2007, Finland received its first conviction related to YouTube. It all began when 8th grade high school student, 15 years old boy from Lieksa took a video where his teacher sang on Labour Day's Eve. After that he named the video with a title "**Karaoke of mental hospital**" and released it on YouTube with a description text "Here's a lunatic singing at the karaoke of the mental hospital. Very nice sound, don't you agree?"

Over 600 people saw the video with the teacher singing. The author removed the clip from YouTube after the talk with his principal.

However, the teacher sued the boy and he got conviction. The teacher wanted 2 000 Euros compensation for emotional agony. To compare the ballast of the penalty, the average on-the-spot-fine was only 77 Euros in total and the average fixed penalty 196 Euros in Finland (Statistics Finland 2007). The town court adjudged 90 Euros amercement due to slander. In addition, the teacher received 8 00 euros compensation and the student had to pay 2 200 euros of court fees on behalf of the teacher (Sainio 2007).

## Traditional media adopts social media

After the summer of 2007, the interactive TV show **Sinä (You)** by FremantleMedia Finland was brought to the audience on SubTV. The idea

was to collect UCC and broadcast these 150 second video clips on national TV. All who wanted to participate filled in an online form, sent a video clip and approved the agreement with FremantleMedia to give up their rights to the content.

The production team selected the first participants, but after that they let the audience choose who they would like to see again. The audience could vote by sending an SMS with their mobile phones to the given number.

The winner of Sinä was **Posti-Risto** from Vantaa, and he received 10 000 euros. The award was given in August 2007, yet in January 2008, there was no trace of the videos or information about the program on the SubTV website anymore.

The life-cycle of visibility is getting shorter and shorter in the media, whereas social media sites tend to let their databases grow in order to increase links to their node, which gives better search results.

Some of the newspapers have also made their own social media tryouts. Alma Media published the community based Oma.fi for its own yellow tabloid Iltalehti at the end of 2007. Helsingin Sanomat has omakaupunki.fi. It will be interesting to see what happens with these platforms.

## **Facebook invasion**

Facebook had globally been a rather closed community until Facebook Inc. by **Mark Zuckerberg** opened the doors for others than American students as well.

Only a few Finns had heard about social networking site called Facebook in the beginning of 2007. Helsingin Sanomat opened the journalist runway with Facebook promotions as they published their first article.

The change was however rather rapid, since after the Jokela Massacre, Aamulehti (2007), one of the biggest newspapers in Finland, already mentioned in its news article that people had a condolence group in Facebook

to share the sorrow. Facebook had become a trendy virtual space for the Finns.

At the end of October 2007, a member of the Finnish Parliament and Green Party, Mr **Jyrki J. Kasvi** revealed to the viewers of a popular TV show Ajankohtainen Kakkonen that he enjoys being a Facebook vampire with her fellow politician **Rosa Meriläinen**, who also had her profile in Facebook already. There were several articles, columns and TV interviews about Facebook in between these reports and also afterwards, which promoted the site for free. When community members added more friends to their own profiles, they took care of the marketing campaign for Facebook at the same time.

In January 2008, Helsingin Sanomat, the biggest national newspaper in Finland, had its own news feed included as a Facebook application by **Lassi Kurkijärvi** and **Jiri Kupiainen**. The application had 71 users.

Some of the Finnish companies have embraced the social media. These companies have their own groups and networks in the present social media sites and the interaction is not of the forced sort.

When an employee goes to work, what she or he faces are more opportunities for casual voluntary socializing on Facebook – and time consuming trivial entertainment.

For example, Nokia had its own network in Facebook with almost 2 900 members in January 2008. Ericsson had almost 6 000 of its staff in Facebook. On the other hand, some firms have banned the social network site and do not allow their staff to open it at all from their desktops.

## **Blogosphere, just entertainment?**

In March 2008, an interesting discussion arose between the Finnish bloggers and Helsingin Sanomat journalist **Esa Mäkinen** about the emphasis on entertainment in the Finnish blogosphere. Mäkinen wrote in HS

(18.03.2008) about the privatised nature of Finnish blogs – most popular are themes like knitting, anonymous exposures about personal life, fashion and trends, jokes and humour, cartoon and food. The more serious themes, like politics or broader social critique, are rather vague in the Finnish blogosphere compared to some other countries.

This provoked lot of angry comments from bloggers who wanted to underline the importance of networks that bloggers form and the freedom that these networks give for all.

Some bloggers also wanted to defend the value of making entertaining, personal content, which can be as important for their makers as some more “serious” blogs.

It is hard to say how well this type of grassroots media critique is working for example in Finland in general, but at least in some cases the blogging community has been able to correct some of the mistakes that the mainstream media has made.

Bloggers have also activated and joined their forces when the parliament has created laws that hurt the peer to peer culture in underlining the rights of the copyright owners (Majava 2006) and lately in 2008, when the campaign against child porn led into closing down also other services that had nothing to do with child porn. At least in these cases, the Finnish blogosphere managed to actively take part in the social discussion, although the average atmosphere on blogs is rather relaxed when one evaluates the discourse and styles of the blog posts.

# 6.

## Value chains of potential media uses and new revenue streams

### Is there economics in the participation?

Participation economy is another trendy concept with a definition, and the meaning still somewhat unclear. It belongs to a group of terms that are all used to describe the new situation developed in web production and economics.

Other related terms are, for example, sharing economy, peer-to-peer economy, wkinomics, networked economy etc. The related concepts for participation economy are also, for example, crowdsourcing and synthetic economy (Hintikka 2008).

In this chapter, we first go through some important aspects relating to the nature of participation in order to build some understanding of what this concept might mean. After that, we will develop our version of this concept and discuss its relation to the “real” monetary economy.

The simplest way to define what participatory economy means is to tie it to the commoditization. Melakoski et. al. (2007, 9) state: “The participatory economy means commodities that are produced, distributed, shared and consumed in social media.”

Hintikka (2008) does not want to try to fix the definition of what

participatory economy is, but still gives one useful foothold when stating that participatory economy is basically the same economy as the traditional one.

In Hintikka's report, participation economy is related to the new concepts that evolve in the fields of innovation, production, development, distribution, exchange, competition and consumption of material and immaterial commodities. The birth of these commodities requires collective or mass-based action in the communication networks and thus the birth of markets.

Hintikka points out these new web based concepts of action are not solely tied to commercial actors or activities. They can be used for example in the field of governance, civic activism, learning and networked collaboration.

The idea of two sectors of the economy intertwining is hardly new. Toffler (1980, 275–276) has referred already in the 70s to sectors A and B, the economics where consumers get involved with the production and turn into prosumers, which eventually changes “the entire function, role, and power of the market”.

Toffler (1980, 266) describes that sector A includes “all that unpaid work done directly by people for themselves, their families, or their communities” whereas sector B “comprises all the production of goods and services for sale or swap through the exchange network or market.”

In Toffler's terms, the change will occur as the emergence of a new economy (1980, 276), we refer to this economy as the participatory economy built with the help of social media.

—Loose networks playing and creating use value

Yochai Benkler (2006) does not use the concept of participatory economy in his seminal work *The Wealth of Networks*.



Still, Benkler touches the same theme when talking about *the networked information economy* which improves the practical capacities of individuals in the networks along three dimensions.

Individuals have the capacity to do more *for and by themselves*. They have the improved capacity to do more in loose communality *with others, without being constrained to organizing their relationship through a price system or in traditional hierarchical models of social and economic organization*.

The networked economy improves the capacity of individuals to do more in formal organizations that operate outside the market sphere, too, according to Benkler (2006).

One strain of a concept participatory economy stems from the radical political theory. Activist and political theorist Michael Albert (2001), one of the developers of the theory of participatory economics, or *parecon*, says the vision for the participatory economy in general should be based on allocation via participatory planning, and on values like solidarity, diversity, and self-management.

Jonathan Sterne (2001) points out:

*Any vision of a participatory economy and a participatory culture must include some space for labor that is essentially a form of play: “labor” that is without direction, purpose, or goal -- activity that is pleasurable or meaningful in and of itself.*

So following this thought, participatory economy should be based on activity that is satisfying in and of itself.

Michel Bauwens (2005) writes about use-value when describing the peer to peer culture and its general logic. For Bauwens, *peer to peer economy* is based mainly on use-value and distributed capital for the user community. He calls peer to peer production, governance and ownership

as the third mode, different from for-profit or public production, governance and ownership.

Bauwens' list reminds greatly of our ideas about participatory economy. In participatory economy, companies and governments may also benefit and the product brings *exchange value for a market*, **in addition** – or actually – **thanks to** *use-value being created among and for a community of users*.

However, as Bauwens points out, participation economy and forms of social capital are indirectly based on monetary economy, through which the opportunities to participate in the first place (free time and other resources like computer or mobile devices) are created.

We want to reformulate the earlier ideas.

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- ...✚ We think that participatory economy is based on use-value for a community of users. The use-value for people can be fun, meaningful things to spend some time with, connections, friends and practical tools, to mention only a few.
  - ...✚ Participation often creates *social capital* for the participants. They achieve know-how, trust and fame within the communities or feel self-satisfied.
  - ...✚ The processes empower people to do things by themselves, with their peers, or in networks, communities and organizations which can be outside the market sphere, too.
  - ...✚ When the activity accumulates, at the same time as it brings the use-value for the participant, it brings something new; an additional value for others; to people, to the design, for the owner of the site or the stakeholders related. The action and its result can be defined as participatory economy.
- 

Sometimes only the severe efforts, hard work and dedication create the value. At other times, the use-value comes without any extra indi-

vidual effort or intentional desire of helping others, which yet emerge as additional side products for others to enjoy.

Star Wreck is a good example of the first form of participatory economy logics. The social bookmarking system called del.icio.us is an example of the latter.

Del.icio.us connects people who save bookmarks to their del.icio.us bookmark profile, the contents of which are also immediately shared in a common space open to anyone unless the user decides otherwise. The participants of the service describe single website addresses found by them. They archive the URL in del.icio.us, potentially with the same tags, the key words, as others have attached to the same specific content or relevant topics. This way everyone will benefit, since they can find the related information others have filtered from the net.

The beauty in it is that it is *not necessarily the ultimate goal of the people* to network, yet they are connected because of the similar way to define content; because they have signed in to the same social media site to bookmark their web search results.

It is neither the ultimate goal to help del.icio.us build a web directory of recent links found on the web. However, del.icio.us transforms into a site that offers up-to-date content streams showing what the human-filters have distilled today from the web. With no additional costs whatsoever.

The result of the individual's action accumulates something additional. Perhaps the final result for the whole network of people or for the firm maintaining the service is un-expected by the individual, yet well-designed and pre-planned by the firm.

This way, also the monetary economy seeks its way to capitalize the participatory economy; trying to transform the participation into a source of income.

## Participatory economy and the monetary economy

In participatory economy based on social media, former users and audiences turn into profitable assets, not only or not at all because of their subscriptions or because they are eyeballs to sell for advertisers, but because of their ideas, content and actions that can be the new resource the industry has been looking for.

Participatory economy and open innovation, which both can be based on social media, are strongly reminiscent of open source (OS). Open source began as the hacker culture, already in the 70s. For example, UNIX code was at first available to anyone ([Wikipedia](#)).

Slowly, some of the developer forums turned into hybrid ones where firms actually paid salary for their own coders to participate.

Some of the open source developer forums are business projects calling for OS developers to contribute, which is rather different from voluntary and self-organized hacker communities. In fact, open source is far from trying to accomplish everything for free.

The open source communities vary from voluntary communities to more business-oriented communities. (Mikkonen, Vaden, Vainio 2007) IBM began to support Linux in 1999 (Tapscott & Williams 2006) and in 2007, Sun bought MySQL.

Probably no one anticipated the business opportunities in open source at the beginning, when free and open source projects started, but with the content development, the desire for making business grew much faster.

Just think about Linux. Commercial solutions support Linux although the core of it is still free.

The majority of the social media sites building participatory economy are owned by commercial Web 2.0 companies or traditional media houses whose interest is to make money. Wikipedia is one of the most known rare examples of participatory economy sites that do not depend on a business plan and venture capitalists.

When people participate on the net, they provide content about themselves, about others, about the issues, objects and surroundings they are interested in. Some of this data the system design tracks, combines and archives automatically. Some are results of the creative action, produced independently, collectively or in collaboration.

The next layer is the meta-content people create as they utilize the sites or when they define themselves the content, like in folksonomies, where users tag the data.

People can also help to make the structure or offer services.

All this transforms into participatory economy when participants and/or the owner of the website gain more than they first expected without any financial compensations.

**Bhargava (2006)** has blogged on how to optimize social media to get good results. He wrote a list of 5 tasks:

- 
1. Increase your linkability.
  2. Make tagging and bookmarking easy.
  3. Reward inbound links.
  4. Help your content travel.
  5. Encourage the mash-up.
- 

The list nowadays has multiple additional pieces of advice, since the bloggers decided to develop the original list further on their own blogs.

## **Business models of social media**

Many say that the only business model for social media sites is to get venture capitalists to pay the costs or hope that one of the big search engine companies would buy the firm.

YouTube is one the most known examples of social media. In 2006,

the site broadcasted 100 million short videos daily.

YouTube co-founders **Chad Hurley, Steve Chen** and **Jawed Karim** were all former employees of PayPal, the payment service eBay bought in 2002. They got a big boost to their business with the Google deal for the sale of the video web site, worth then about 1.7 billion dollars. ([Hopkins 2006](#))

The OECD report (2007) on participative web and user created content offers several examples of how advertising is going to be one of the most important business models of social media in the future. According to the report, the user-created content (UCC) platforms have already taken a good slice of the advertising revenue cake.

In August 2006, Google predicted 900 million US dollars minimum as ad revenues over 3.5 to News Corp. for the right to broker advertising on MySpace and some other sites!

The giant Microsoft provides digital advertising solutions on Facebook. It is no wonder. Facebook has more than 58 million members who have created altogether over 58,000 networks based on region, work, or school. ([Microsoft 2008](#)).

That is quite an amount of data about people's personal desires, their networks and habits.

According to research made at VTT (Kangas et al 2007) at the moment there are only a few alternative business models for traditional advertising.

They listed four larger themes which are

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- ...❖ selling content,
  - ...❖ developing and selling underlying technologies,
  - ...❖ adopting social media tools and approaches for professional use,  
and
  - ...❖ sharing revenue in various mash-up applications.
-

As the amount of data on the Internet grows, so grows the need for efficient ways to search and also find the results one is looking for. One of the best sources for revenue in the future includes not just traditional search engines, but the recommendation and review systems and smart aggregators. (OECD 2007)

When online payments become popular, financial services bring revenues for those who can provide the suitable technologies and solutions making also the provision-based business model possible. (OECD 2007)

Some examples of these approaches already exist, and the researchers of VTT do not believe that traditional mass scale advertising could alone become the dominant business model for social media, as it has become in traditional mass media. (Kangas et al. 2007)

For advertisers, social media is problematic. It is not an easy task to understand how the online communities function and which kinds of messages suit the selected environment.

After the campaign content is released, the outcome might even transform into something else, even the opposite of what the brand owner expected. In addition, the placement of ads can be very random or even embarrassing.

The feeling of not being in control can be quite an obstacle!

Also, the return-on-investment is hard if not impossible to calculate or predict. Should the campaign count only clicks, compare the clicks to sales or what? Clicks and visits on a single page do not tell if the content spread further and whether the users really liked what they saw or thought it was useful for them.

Yet many utilize the same measures as OECD (2007) lists: “web site usage (dwell time on site, depth of visit / page views per session / share of repeat visits), or clicks on the actual advertisement banner leading the user to the webpage of the brand being advertised.”

What is the worth of the new customers the campaign brought or the time spent with the brand? If the customers are nodes that bring more

people with them as they recommend the service or product, they are more valuable, but if they link to no one and bring no sales, was all the fuss worth the bucks.

Another issue is the distraction. Perhaps people do not notice the ad at all. Especially on the social network sites, people concentrate on task-specific activities where they have a mood that might be totally unsuitable for accepting or even noticing promotional materials.

All these aspects diminish the potential ad revenues social media sites present.

The [OECD report Participative web: User created content \(OECD 2007\)](#) summarizes that businesses could support, search, aggregate, filter, host and diffuse user-created content to generate revenues.

However, the market is still young, so the good cases to learn from are rare and not studied in depth. So far “the non-commercial ventures of enthusiasts or start-ups with little or no revenues” have started the social media sites which venture capitalists later take on their portfolios. (OECD 2007)

It is typical that there are no business plans with well-thought business models. The owners of the site take huge risks maintaining sites that cause costs every day. The only goal seems to be to lure more and more users. (OECD 2007)

The start-ups have certainly read their O’Reilly’s Web 2.0 mantras.

*Web 2.0 is the business revolution in the computer industry caused by the move to the internet as platform, and an attempt to understand the rules for success on that new platform. Chief among those rules is this: Build applications that harness network effects to get better the more people use them. (O’Reilly 2007)*

Also, the many business acquisitions lend themselves to the vision that money talks as soon as firm creates enough public buzz and/or the



site receives a suitable amount of users.

LinkedIn was founded in 2003. Its market share is estimated to be 300 million dollars. Flickr opened in 2004, owners received 35 million dollars in 2005. YouTube was launched in 2005, sold in 2006 with 1.65 billion US dollars. Bebo was worth 800 million dollars when it was bought.

So, selling your company does seem as one appealing business model overall after the online community has grown big enough or at least assured sufficient online and media presence to reassure the venture capitalists.

Some screen for new talents from social media to take them into the traditional media publishing (OECD 2007), but so far there are no actual examples of this being successful business for the social media firms themselves as the brokers of the actual talents.

However, some are able to make revenues as they intermediate the content from the talented authors to the 3rd party. Big brands look for new ideas for their marketing campaigns for example with the help of Current TV's Viewer Created Ad Messages ([VCAM's](#)), ReVVer videos or in YouTube's video contests.

Other firms try to solve problems with the help of the professionals and crowds gathered on idea markets, like Innocentive, and they are ready to pay more than a penny for the resource.

This business looks the most like traditional business where people are remunerated according to their work results.

The OECD report lists 6 approaches to get revenue with UCC. The approaches are:

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- ...✧ Voluntary donations
  - ...✧ Charging viewers for services
  - ...✧ Pay-per-item model
  - ...✧ Subscription model
  - ...✧ Advertising-based models
  - ...✧ Licensing of content and technology to third parties.
-

## —Voluntary donations

In *voluntary donations*, authors of the content and developers of the sites rely on the fact that someone will compensate the work done. They use *Donate* buttons and even widgets that community members can attach to their own sites for promoting the cause.

We are not too sure whether one can see asking for donations as an actual business strategy or more like some sort of charity work and related causes.



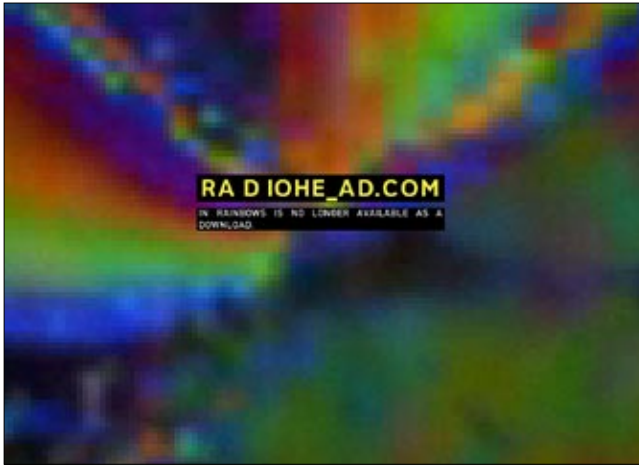
**IMAGE 3.** Donation widget of Creative Commons in 2008.

From the business side, the Radiohead case is intriguing. Radiohead let their fans choose how much to pay for *In Rainbows*, the seventh album the band published [online](#) as compressed MP3s in October 2007. “It’s up to you”, like the website explained the pricing of the album. The actual in-store CD release came to stores in January 2008 (Rainer 2007).

The fans could pay as little as 45 p which was the credit card handling fee or buy for £40 (\$80) a deluxe box-set which included the album on CD, two vinyl records, a CD, artwork and lyrics. ([Rayner](#) 2007) In 2008, the record was no more available for download.

Trent Reznor from Nine Inch Nails criticized that Radiohead created “a marketing gimmick” to raise hype. His own band offers different for-

mats and a free sample to try before buying. The artist has even left the record label to become an independent artist. ([Chartier 2008](#))



**IMAGE 4.** Radiohead gave sad news for the community announcing on the record's website that the open pricing for the record had ended.

Some fans appreciated the gesture, nevertheless, but some pointed out that perhaps closing the download option with open price also ended upcoming revenues fans would have liked to pay *directly* to the band ([Image 5](#)).



**IMAGE 5.** Radiohead fan's comment on the site called Digg in March 2008.

## —Charging viewers for content or services

Some sites charge subscribers or viewers for the content (a pay-per-item). However, the problem has been that micro payments with credit card or as online payments are not too practical for the consumers. (OECD 2007)

For example, [iStockphoto](#) sells user created photographs, illustrations and video from its stock with the pay-per-item model. It is hard for professional photographers to compete with a firm that is able to offer images starting with a one-dollar price tag and royalty-free videos as cheap as 10 dollars. The site also shares the revenues which makes it appealing to the talents.

Then, [Wall Street Journal](#) offers free preview, but is otherwise subscription based with a 79-dollar annual fee if one takes only the online version, and 99 dollars together with the printed version.



IMAGE 5. Wall Street Journal shows the whole article only for subscribers .

However, in social media it is more typical that users pay a fee for better or additional service features than for the access to content.

For example, Flickr pushes users to buy a Pro account to be able to upload photos to the server without so many limitations.

The content can be also purely synthetic, like Second Life has shown with virtual items market.



**IMAGE6.** Friends for Sale application in Facebook allows users to buy synthetic goods with virtual money.

## —Advertising

Advertising in social media has been quite traditional and reminds us of the ad sales in newspapers, magazines, radio and TV. Sites include banners, embedded video ads, trailers and branded channels or pages. The newest thing is also to share the ad revenues with the users who create the content or bring additional, measurable value to the site.

Like in media, the advertisements can be shown or sent to a segment or small niche of people as well as to the whole mass. The software tries to be smart and translate the interests of people from tags and search words they use and from the content they provide either intentionally or along the way when they participate on the site's action.

One should note that content can be very misleading. Especially bloggers use colorful language that taken separately out of context can induce funny references which do not necessarily compliment the brand.

The potential places for ads are borders of the web pages, ads combined to the side bar of video players or different kinds of widgets. Some also add advertisements at the end of messages the participants send to each other.

There are also examples of making own social network profiles or brand sites with a social media twist to advertise a certain product or service.

Advertising-based models fascinate many, at least if one looks at how general an approach it is in social media. Also, users benefit from ads since these revenues help to maintain free access to the site without charges.

The New York Times (Hansell 2007) celebrated as a breakthrough the news about [Imeem](#) to enter into a partnership with four major record labels [Universal Music Group](#), [EMI](#), [Sony BMG](#), and [Warner Music](#) to give its users the option to consume full-length tracks and videos for free.

*This just might be the breakthrough the music industry needs. At the root of this there could be a solid compromise between music labels and listeners: You can listen to a song on your PC free, if you see advertising. If you want to own the song, burn a CD or put it on an iPod, you have to pay 99 cents a track. (Hansell 2007)*

The social network site Imeem has been reported to have 19 million users ([Ostrow 2007](#)), so it is rather obvious that record labels find the deal with music and videos on an ad-supported basis valuable enough. According to Mashable ([Ostrow 2007](#)), Imeem was the first company to make this happen.

Not all social media platforms want to build their own advertising system. Google AdSense and Microsoft are the most known examples of this kind of service providers. Some sites, like ReVVer and Current TV, share the advertising revenue in similar ways to those sites which redistribute part of the pay-per-item revenues to the authors of the content.

– Licensing of content and technology to third parties

As social media content gets better, it also starts to interest outside of the web. Television stations may buy the rights for showing the material, as it happened with the *Star Wreck* movie. In addition, the social software developed for a site can be licensed to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties who need similar features or services for their own use.

To be able to make revenues like this, web site developers need to take into account that every member of the site must agree on general terms who owns the copyright of the content and under which kinds of terms the site owner can distribute or even reproduce the content further.

The idea of Creative Commons (CC) is a bit similar to the voluntary donation approach, since it builds on the principles of free use of the works of others. Nearly 70 percent of the some 150 million CC-licensed works available in 2007 were licensed with terms that declined commercial use, but permitted the rights to use the content for non-commercial purposes. ([Hietanen & al. 2007, 53](#)).

Creative Commons is a copyright license system that has been included in many social media sites. The user selects suitable licenses and then links the content with the necessary CC documents, like “(1) short explanation of what the license means (“commons deed”), (2) detailed legal license text (“legal code”), and (3) technical rights description.” (Hietanen & al. 2007, 43)

It would be worth studying further whether this content nevertheless ends up in some commercial projects and the authors get paid for their work, or how many of the licensed works actually have re-use of any kind or quality good enough to be added in commercial products.

When you post User Content to the Site, you authorize and direct us to make such copies thereof as we deem necessary in order to facilitate the posting and storage of the User Content on the Site. By posting User Content to any part of the Site, you automatically grant, and you represent and warrant that you have the right to grant, to the Company an irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive, transferable, fully paid, worldwide license (with the right to sublicense) to use, copy, publicly perform, publicly display, reformat, translate, excerpt (in whole or in part) and distribute such User Content for any purpose, commercial, advertising, or otherwise, on or in connection with the Site or the promotion thereof, to prepare derivative works of, or incorporate into other works, such User Content, and to grant and authorize sublicenses of the foregoing. You may remove your User Content from the Site at any time. If you choose to remove your User Content, the license granted above will automatically expire, however you acknowledge that the Company may retain archived copies of your User Content. Facebook does not assert any ownership over your User Content; rather, as between us and you, subject to the rights granted to us in these Terms, you retain full ownership of all of your User Content and any intellectual property rights or other proprietary rights associated with your User Content.

**IMAGE 5.** Extract from Facebook Terms revised on November 15, 2007 (March 18, 2008)

Facebook debates show that people are getting more mindful about their copyrights to personal content. The *Facebook owns your photos* group on Facebook has 7 000 members. Regardless of whether they worry over the site terms for nothing, it is a signal that the user terms are far from uncomplicated and easy to understand.

So far, there has not been any big case that would have tested the privacy and copyright boundaries of personal content that gets posted to the social network site or similar social media channels which have strict, perhaps not too fair terms for the users. In the discussion chapter, at the end of this report, we will look into this topic, the privacy concerns, more closely.

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To summarize, the business models of are still in an early phase, lots of experimenting and research is needed to see what ways are fruitful. Advertising may still be one major funder of social media services, but it needs new concepts to succeed.

We argue that people do not find the traditional passive ads, like banners, appealing since they are on the net for a personal purpose that they want to fulfill and their emotional status might be not at all adaptive to external messages the sites show from the sponsors. This statement, however, needs further studies to test its validity.



Provision-based value-adding services or features will most likely be more productive when it comes to revenues. Perhaps privacy will also turn out to be an issue people are ready to pay for.

It also seems that selling virtual goods grows rapidly. Some of the sites still practice with currency that is not yet real money, but the jump into making real bucks out of the business is not too far ahead.

# 7.

## Motivations and creativity of content communities

Management relying on the Open Innovation approach faces the challenge of how to motivate people not only to be creative, but to give intellectual property to the company without monetary incentives (West and Gallagher 2006).

Some online communities, especially intermediaries, give monetary rewards to innovators. However, there are conflicting results concerning motivation and monetary rewards. For example, the classic research in social psychology suggests that incentives might actually have a negative effect on ideation (e.g. Toubia, 2006).

Amabile, Hennessey & Grossman (1986) concluded that explicitly contracting to do an activity in order to receive a reward will have negative effects on creativity, but receiving no reward or only a non-contracted-for reward will have no such negative effects. Therefore, it is called into question whether members see monetary rewards as motivation factors (Antikainen & Ahonen 2007).

For many, the possibility of self expression is enough and the main motivator to participate. At least, in the case studies of the journalist bloggers of Image, 53 %, and the citizen journalists of Apureportterit, 48 % support the statement.

Next, we will present more closely the three case studies conducted during the Parteco research project in 2006–2008 to show some remarks of communities creating content, and how the owners of these communities were able to motivate people to participate in the content production.

The A-lehdet cases are examples of the traditional media adapting social media, whereas the Star Wreck case is a showcase of a collaborative production that started as a small project without commercial agenda or a company behind the original idea.

## **A-Lehdet case studies**

### —Bloggers and citizen journalists

We conducted two case studies in the Parteco project with the magazines of major Finnish publishing house A-lehdet.

The first case was an electronic questionnaire targeted to the group bloggers of *Image magazine*. Image is a monthly magazine, targeted mostly to youngish or early middle-aged urban Finns. The group bloggers come mostly from outside Image magazine or A-lehdet. They are volunteers who receive free Image subscriptions as a reward for their activities. Also, some journalists from Image are blogging on this site.



IMAGE 6. Image.fi 16/05/2007

The other case was carried out with *Apu-lehti*. It is a magazine that differs from Image in various ways. *Apu*'s readers are mostly middle aged or older, they very often live in the countryside or small villages and towns. *Apu-reportterit* was an initiative to activate the readers of *Apu* to become voluntary reporters writing about various aspects of life.

The case study results summarized in this report are from a questionnaire used for Image-bloggers and for *Apu* reporters. The *Apureportterit* survey received 83 answers which makes the answer rate really good, since the web site had about 100 citizen journalists in 2007 when the survey was open.

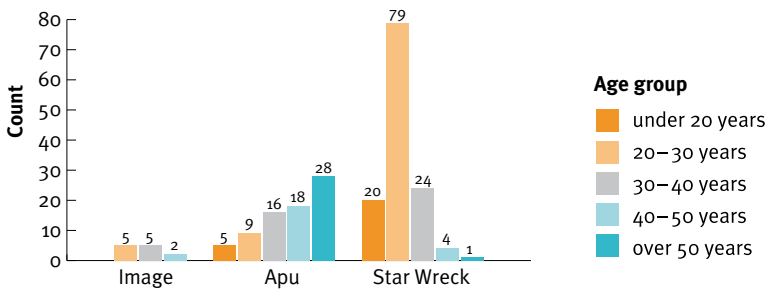
## –Demographics

Image bloggers were young and urban, highly educated, and their lifestyle is perhaps oriented to consuming and experiences. Most of them

have some background in journalism or media production before joining this group.

Image bloggers were netsavvy, well aware of the possibilities of the net. All bloggers had published something before this project.

Apu reporters were middle aged, living mostly outside the Helsinki area, less educated, they seen life and done little bit of this and that during their life. As many as 82 % of them had some background in journalism or writing stories to newspapers. The net as an environment was not that familiar to Apu reporters.



**FIGURE 1.** Age groups of those that answered to the Image, Apu and Star Wreck questionnaires.

### —Motivation factors

One common denominator for both of the groups is that they are either motivated or very motivated to continuing the kind of content production they were able to try in the cases.

Both groups thought the Internet has essentially increased the possibilities of getting information about important issues and improved the possibilities of participating in the general social processes.

Both groups also considered that the main motivating factor in these

projects was the possibility of *self expression* with Image at 53 % and Apu at 48 % shares of the people who answered to the survey.

The Apu reporters wanted to have an influence on the world and share their experiences with others. The Image bloggers wanted to motivate people to live actively and also to entertain themselves and others.

The greatest benefit in these projects had been in participation which had led to learning. Especially, improvement in writing skills had been very satisfactory for both of the groups.

Also, the economic rewards like free subscriptions of Image or small prizes (50 or 100 Euros) that Apu promised to give to the best reports were stated to be important. However, the economic rewards were not the main goal for the most of the participants.



IMAGE 7. Apureportterit in September 2007.

—Enthusiastic participants

Image bloggers were relatively satisfied with the Image blog idea and the concept in general. The fact that Image bloggers are more focused to

certain issues than a “guess what happened to me the other day” type of writing was considered to be positive. Some of the respondents stressed that there should be more critical analysis; others wanted to add material which would have a more personal tone so that it would be easier to identify with them.

*– It would be great if the issues would also interest others than the so called busy and trendy city people (one answer)*

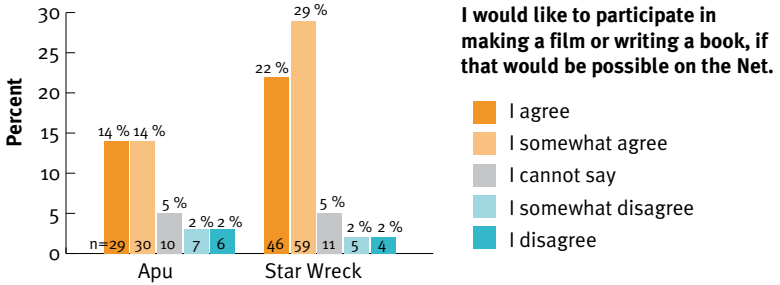
Several bloggers had gained new friends because of blogging on the Image site. All wanted to continue blogging.

The Apu reporters commented very positively the whole idea. It was considered to be an interesting new field, encouraging and (self) developing for participators, easy to use and in general, considered an excellent idea. It was considered to be important and rewarding that the ordinary people can write with their own language. The content was considered to be close to readers and their life. The site was considered to be less censored than the letters to the editor pages in the printed Apu or in the magazines or newspapers in general.

The scope of the project was understood to be nationwide as the Apu magazine is. The project was considered to be important also for the future of Finland:

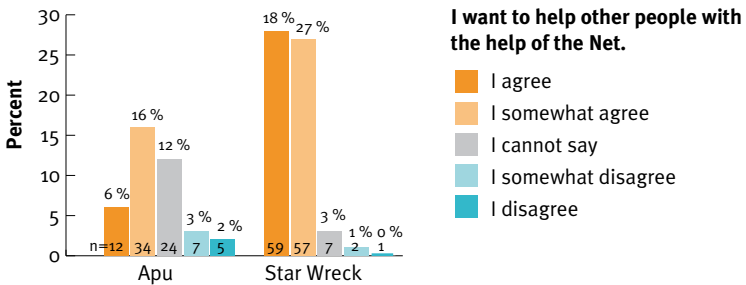
*– This is an excellent way to write about those issues that you want. You are not tied to certain localities or local issues. (one of the answers)*

*– (these kinds of projects) would make the society more democratic and visible (another answer)*



**FIGURE 2.** The willingness to take part in the collective creation on the net among the Apu reporters and Star Wreckers.

When the Apureportterit and Star Wreck community was asked whether they would like to join to new collaboration project, for example to do a movie in a collective way, the answers were similarly emphasized. Both groups were eager to take part in such projects in the future.



**FIGURE 3.** The willingness to help others via Internet.

When asked about whether they want to help others on the net, the Apureportterit group were more reserved than members of the Star Wreck community. This may reflect the difference between projects that are more about publishing one’s personal content like Apureportterit, and Star Wreck, which was a more collective effort.



## —Some general features of the content

Image.fi postings are short as blog postings usually are. Many of them use the me narrator instead of the passive which is common in news journalism. Image bloggers also often comment on the issues they are writing about. The topics vary a great deal. Some write about their hobbies (climbing, other sports), others give hints on what to do and where to go in Helsinki. A few of the bloggers seem to be globetrotters who blog from exotic places giving ideas where to travel. Also, ethical themes, like the ethics of consuming, are discussed broadly.

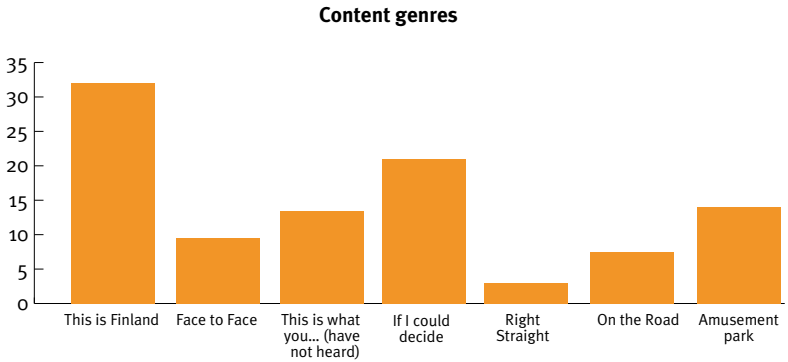
Compared to “*independent*” or *free blogging*, Image bloggers don’t open their whole lives in writing diaries as many bloggers do. In a way, they stay more on journalistic grounds when they write and link on their special topics with a personal flavor.

The Apu reporters can be divided into three big groups. One group wants to deal with socially important, general themes, although the themes are often depicted through their own life stories or experiences. Another group wants to give good advice to their peers when writing, for example, about their travel experiences abroad. The third group clearly wants to entertain themselves and others by writing funny stories or chatty articles, often fiction, written under a pseudonym.

When the amount of published stories is compared by the broad themes of the stories, we found that *This is Finland* (Näin Suomessa) theme is the most popular covering 32 % of the published stories, (the first column on the left), second is *If I Could Decide..* (Jos minä saisin päättää 21.3 % (4<sup>th</sup>), third is *Amusement Park* (Huvipuisto) 13.8 % (7<sup>th</sup>). After these came *This is what you have not heard* (Tätä ette ole kuulleet), *Face to Face* (Kasvokkain), *On the Road* (Reissun päällä) and *Right Straight* (Oikea suora).

*This is Finland* covers “true stories” about life in Finland, *Face to Face* offers portraits about interesting people, *This You Haven’t Heard* covers “un-

official news”, *If I Could Decide* discusses societal problems, *Right Straight* offers writings about sport, *On the Road* reports about trips and traveling and *Amusement Park* offers fictive, often funny stories or causeries written often with a pseudonym.



**FIGURE 4.** The genres of content made by Apu reporters.

#### — Notions of the challenges

Here is a collection of problems and requests reported in the questionnaires of Apu reporters and Image bloggers.

- 
- ...✧ Both groups would have liked to have more feedback, both from their peers and fellow bloggers or reporters and from professional journalists.

---

  - ...✧ Apu reporters criticized that the publishing pace of the reports was too slow. Some had waited for weeks to see their stories published.

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  - ...✧ Both groups would have very much liked to see more discussion following their writings.

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...✚ The groups have not become communities in the sense that they would have made new friends in the process.

---

The editor of Apu reporters' site told in the autumn 2007 that the amounts of visitors at the Apu web site did not increase as much as was expected due to the reporter project. He also estimated that so far there has not been such quality content that could be used as such in the printed magazine.

Here are some general ideas to develop these kinds of projects further:

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- ...✚ In order to create more continuity to the projects, the groups should become real communities which would act independently or develop in a self-directing way as much as possible.
  - ...✚ The community needs a face or faces, persons who answer questions, build contacts, encourage and guide the participants.
  - ...✚ If the web site has special themes, the themes should be developed to match the magazine *and* the website.
  - ...✚ The most active members of the groups could take part in the journalistic publishing process – creating ideas, editing, organizing reporters work etc. as, for example, in open source communities or in other collaborative projects.
  - ...✚ More content would be created through feedback systems; Giving points or stars to peers could be an easy start.
  - ...✚ The best pieces of work should be noticed and brought into the view of the general public via publishing it in the print version.
- 

All in all, these two experiments showed that there is still much to be developed in the ways that a journalistic institution should relate to their content creating communities.

## The Star Wreck Case

— How it all began

Star Wreck: In the Pirkinning is an interesting example of an open content hit. People downloaded the movie 3–4 million times from the website of the production company Tuotantoyhtiö Energia. What fascinates us even more is the fact that the movie was produced in collaboration with a voluntary network of people.

The case began in a city called Tampere, where **Samuli Torssonen** started the Star Wreck movie series in 1992. He made the Star Wreck animation alone and using a home PC. During the years, Torssonen kept on developing the idea of Star Wreck and grew a group of volunteers around the project.

In October 2005, the final version of the movie Star Wreck – In the Pirkinning was published. During the production of the movie, the core team included 5 people in addition to Samuli Torssonen, the owner of the original idea and passionate sci-fi fan. In addition, 300 names of volunteers could be added in the movie end titles.

After the movie launch, the community received even more success, and, at the end of 2007, some 2,000 people participated in the Star Wreck online Community.

With the help of social media, the movie received publicity. At the end of 2007, there were over 8 million movie downloads, 17,000 DVDs sold, and 2 start-up companies born as a result of the production project: Tuotantoyhtiö Energia and Star Wreck Studios. The Finnish national television YLE TV2, the Belgian national television channel Canvas, and the Italian TV-channel Jimmy have broadcast the movie. The Finnish TV audience saw the movie in January 2006. In October 2007, AMG and Medallion Media had released the movie even in Japan. (Lietsala & Joutsen 2007)

What happened to the community after the movie was ready and people saw the positive media coverage? The amount of community members doubled. (Lietsala & Joutsen 2007)

Samuli Torssonen was able to expand a one amateur show into a collaborative production, since he was persistent with the goal. He was also lucky or amazingly proactive when he set the sci-fi parody as the theme of the movie and kept on building the trustworthy social network around the movie.

Torssonen invited first the people he knew and then encouraged them to also invite people they knew and who could be valuable for the project. However, not everybody knew each other beforehand. It was enough if one of the members thought the new person to be worth contacting.

When the own social networks of the team got scarce, they opened up the invitations to people they did not know. Discussion forums, e-mails and existing social network sites like IRC-Galleria were taken as tools to call for more volunteers to participate.

The team found script writer **Jarmo Puskala**, who later became one of the core members, from the online forum of Star Wreck. He was able to shine with his skills and own enthusiasm. After the team got fixed, it became harder to join the group, at least in the inner circle who were making decisions and carrying out the strategic leadership, like one of the interviewed core members pointed out. (Lietsala & Joutsen 2007)

The 7th episode Star Wreck: In the Pirkinning included actors, special effects and computer modeled environments. Only one of the actors was hired and a handful of the team got a small payment of the work done.

Since the leader and the core team members were all young men under 30 years old, Samuli Torssonen's mother turned out to be somewhat useful by borrowing her apartment for the movie production meetings and feeding the 'staff'.

The Star Wreck team was able to make a movie for international distribution with a shoe-string budget of 15,000 Euros. Nowadays, the movie

is under the Creative Commons license.

At the end, when the movie was finished, the free online distribution sealed up the results and accumulated revenues from the spin-offs related to the movie, though anyone could download the actual movie without paying for it. All revenues of the movie went to the idea owner and leader of the project to cover the expenses. In March 2008, the core team of the project launched a beta web site and a start-up Star Wreck Studios to ‘wreck a movie’. They want to spin the open production model around again, but this time more systematically with a platform that supports collaborative productions intentionally.

Prerequisites for the design of communities	Applies to Star Wreck?	Reasoning
A common interest	Yes	Science Fiction fans (82%)
A sense of belonging	Yes	Members part of the community for years
A shared language, ground rules for participation	Yes	Almost all participants were Finns and the core team managed by Samuli Torssonen guided the participation
An explicit economic purpose	No	Star Wreck was a hobby (77%) and at first, there was no firm taking care of the project, instead, now there are already 2 different companies related.
A sponsor	Yes	Production house Energia provided the facilities, Torssonen took care of the shoe string budget.
Mechanisms to manage intellectual property rights	Some	They asked for permission later.
Physical support of the sponsor	Some	Torssonen took care of the expenses. His mother offered some support for the core team.
Co-operation as a key success factor	Yes	Without the collaboration of the voluntary network, Star Wreck would not have succeeded.

**TABLE 1.** Comparison of Sawhney’s and Prandelli’s list of prerequisites for the design of communities to Star Wreck

Sawhney and Prandelli (2000) have listed prerequisites for the design of communities related to the creation of new products. The prerequisites are a common interest, a sense of belonging, a shared language and ground rules for participation. In addition, there is an explicit economic purpose, a sponsor giving physical support, mechanisms to manage the intellectual property rights and the co-operation as a key to success.

When compared to the Star Wreck: In the Pirkinning movie project, all prerequisites turn out to be accurate except for the economic purpose.

The community did not know from the beginning that the movie would be a free download. It was something the core team decided along the way and then informed the community about. Since the movie began as a hobby, also the founding of Tuotantoyhtiö Energia, Production house Energia was learnt about later.

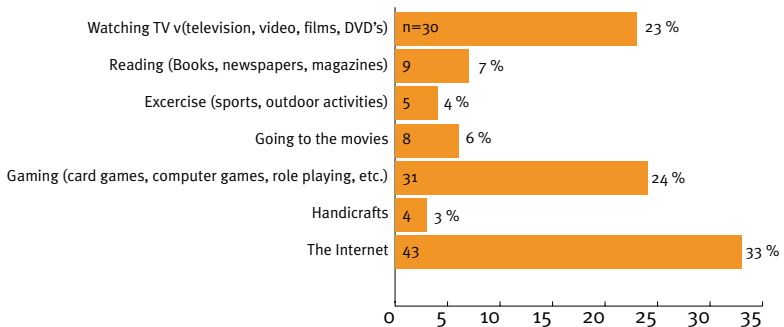
The Star Wreck questionnaire results indicate that especially those people who donated money for the movie project might feel offended when the collaborative production turns into a business. 18.2 % of money donators did not fancy the idea to turn projects like Star Wreck into businesses. However, the community has grown even after the founding of the company.

In total, slightly over 75 % of the star wreckers agreed in some way with the statement that they participated in Star Wreck because the participation also always gave something in return. In addition, the people (almost 63 %) who answered the survey had selected Star Wreck because of the similar-minded people in the community.

Yet, for some (39.4 %, n=50) the sense of belonging did not require their own friends to be members of the community as well. On the other hand, almost as many (37.8 %, n=48) agreed or somewhat agreed that they participated in Star Wreck *because* their friends also participated.

## —Demographics

The Star Wreck online community had 1,000 members during the Star Wreck: In the Pirkinning movie production. Three hundred of them, 30 % of the online community members, have their names in the movie credits due to significant contribution.



**FIGURE 5.** Activities that occupied the most of Star Wrecker's free time.

The results of this report are based on the community members' answers (n=127) taken from two separate online questionnaires, and on the data collected through face-to-face interviews of the core team members (n=5).

The reason for two questionnaires was that there was one for those who had participated in the movie and another for those who were participants of the online community, but had not taken part in the movie production.

According to the survey, almost all Star Wreckers were male Finns under 30 years old who felt like home online. They spent their free time most likely on the net, watching television or playing games.

It was not too big a surprise to notice that the project participants were skilled Internet users and they also participated in other online



communities similar to Star Wreck, either daily (34 %, n=44) or weekly (13 %, n=17) than not at all (28 %, n=36).

Like Wellman and his colleagues (2001, 443) wrote: “People who have been on the Web longer engage in more types of Internet activities.”

As regards the skills, the majority of the Star Wreckers (86.7 %, n=111) were aware of the boundaries of Internet, like the potential misuse of personal information published online. Education seemed not to distinguish how people perceived the boundaries and whether they were open or not.

Most of the people who answered (66 %, n=84) had not, for instance, told more about themselves to others on the net than they would outside the net. Still, a rather big group of people (31.5 %, n=40) had revealed more on the net about themselves than otherwise.

The question remains whether they told about themselves with a nick name that perhaps dims to whom the content actually relates outside the net, or really stood up as a person who can be identified as the actual individual off the Internet, too. The latter might still be the case, since even when using a user name people want to be recognized, like the majority of the Star Wreckers (85.8 %, n=109), who said they utilize the same user name so that others could know who they are.

What was interesting to notice was that, of those who avoid telling anything which could help others to determine who they are in person, only 32.5 % reported to be utilizing several nick names. So, they need some other way to prevent their real identity from being exposed.

Perhaps one answer is that they do not wield their personal lives publicly at all when online. At least 57.5 % of the people who do avoid revealing any content on the net which would let others know who they are also reported that they totally avoid telling about their personal lives in public on the net.

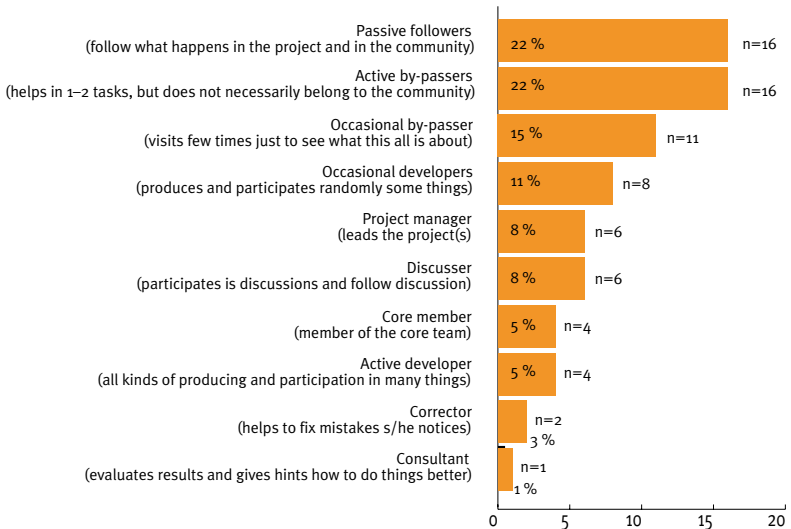
We also found out that using the same nick name does not correlate with the will to meet new people on the net. So perhaps nick name is

more for keeping up with the regular co-participants than for serving social networking with new people.

In fact, the people who were most eager to meet new people on the net were also the ones who told more about themselves and their lives to strangers online than they would have done off the Internet.

This would be worth digging deeper to find the reasons for. It might imply that one needs to know more about a person when meeting online before getting to know each other well enough, or at least that people suppose that way, though others would gladly settle with less information. Or perhaps the persons feel more secure on the Internet, want to be more open, believe they can be publicly private?

Anyhow, this surpasses Parteco’s scope, so let us go back to the Star Wreckers.



**FIGURE 6.** Different role types in Star Wreck’s collaboration movie production.

As noted earlier, the majority of the participants in the Star Wreck project were male. In this respect, the collaborative production called

Star Wreck differs greatly from the study by the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

The study of PEW showed that, in general, girls rule on the Internet. For example, among Web users ages 12 to 17, more girls than boys blog (35 per cent of girls, 20 per cent of boys) and create or work on their own Web pages (32 per cent of girls, 22 per cent of boys). Girls also more actively create profiles on social networking sites (70 per cent of girls 15 to 17 have one, 57 per cent of boys 15 to 17). Boys post videos almost a double amount when compared to girls, but that is about it. ([Rosenbloom 2008](#))

The Star Wreck project seems to abolish the 90-9-1-rule ([Nielsen 2006](#)) people often refer to. According to the rule, in most online communities 90 % of people just lurk around without contributing, whereas 9 % of users participate perhaps a little and the ridiculously small amount, 1 % of the community members, will then take care of almost all the action.

One reason for the difference might be the fandom. The majority of the Star Wreck project participants was sci-fi fans and for this reason already committed to the topic. Like Jenkins (2006) has pointed out, digital technologies enable fan cultural productions. Star Wreck's case certainly confirms this.

To find out which kinds of roles people select in productions like Star Wreck, we offered ready-made role types and asked people to select which role they think applied to them during the collaborative movie production.

The most common roles in Star Wreck's case were active by-passers and passive followers (22 %, n=16 for both).

Passive follower was described beforehand as someone who follows the events and action in the community; whereas active by-passers do not think they belong to the community, though they still could contribute in one or two tasks.

Occasional by-passers represented the third largest group (15 %, n=11). They had just visited for a few times to see what Star Wreck was about.

The project had 6 persons (8 %) who led the production and 4 persons (5 %) as their right hand in the core team. The amount of them answering to the survey is pretty much the same amount as it was in reality.

People were able to select just one role, so they needed to prioritize which role seems to be the most suitable in Star Wreck's case.

When people were asked to describe the nature of their participation in the Star Wreck movie production, the majority selected a choice that stated the production to be random (32 %, n=24) or regular (8 %, n=6) volunteer activity. The second biggest group thought it was a random hobby (23 %, n=17) or a hobby among others (12 %, n=9).

The average person who had participated in the movie production had been a member of the community for 4.6 years, whereas those persons who had not been involved in the movie making, but joined the Star Wreck site, had belonged to the community a bit longer, for 4.8 years. This kind of commitment to a web community is rather exceptional.

The demographic characteristics barely, if at all, help to predict how much people use the Internet ([Wellman et al 2001, 442](#)). We also found no meaningful connection where demographics could have affected the amount of time people spent on the Star Wreck community.

For example, the income level and time spent in the community did not correlate; correlation coefficient stayed near zero. The variance analysis could neither show any significant differences on the participation level based on whether or not the person participated in voluntary work outside of Star Wreck.

Instead, the importance of the community correlated positively with the time spent in the movie production (0.505) and with the time spent in the community (0.436).

In the Star Wreck case, the people who had engaged longer with the movie production turned to managers and core members. In addition, the longer they had participated in the project, the more regularly they visited the community web site, and the more important a role they had

in the community. In comparison, those who gave less time for the movie production were more likely to take roles that were also with less status, like the role of discussor or by-passer.

—Motivational factors

According to Parteco’s online survey results, Star Wreckers were motivated to participate in the collaborative movie project because of the five main reasons listed below.

- 
- ...✧ It is fun for passing time.
  - ...✧ You always get something in return from participation.
  - ...✧ I want to help others.
  - ...✧ I like to share my knowledge and skills with others.
  - ...✧ In my opinion, everyone should give something in return to the community.
- 

The least motivating factors were (the least motivating first):

- 
- ...✧ I want to earn money
  - ...✧ I had nothing else to do
  - ...✧ I get better work opportunities by participating
  - ...✧ I can get feedback about my own stuff
  - ...✧ To get respect.
- 

To acquire these lists, we offered different statements the survey participants had to select from. Everyone had to use the scale of 5 degrees to show whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement. The scale was: I agree, I agree somewhat, I somewhat disagree, I disagree, I do not know.

Though we listed respect among the least motivating factors, it is far from an irrelevant factor. One might even state that profiles and reputation are clearly evident in online communities today.

For example on Amazon.com, all contributors are allowed to create profiles about themselves and as their contributions are measured by the community, their reputation increases. Also, Jeppessen and Frederiksen (2006) have found that recognition in firm-hosted communities is one of the important elements in innovation communities.

Eventually, when we had evaluated the other data in addition to the comparison of ready-given statements, we noticed that the respect and recognition rose rather high in the open-ended questions, where those survey participants who had been part of the Star Wreck film could define the best reward that followed the participation in the Star Wreck Movie project.

Almost 24 percent of the people who answered the question (n=65) said their best reward was to see their own name in the end credits of the movie. The second most popular answer was to highlight the meaning of the actual end-result, the collaboration itself and the emotions the participation arouses. All these positive outcomes were mentioned 11 times each (17 %).

Answers fit into several groups. The researcher categorized the comments on the emotions based on the answers or parts of answers that included words like those in bold below.

- 
- ...‡ **Positive feeling** from being able to help make something unique.
  - ...‡ **Joy** of enhancing a new way to make films.
  - ...‡ **The excitement** about publishing the movie.
  - ...‡ **Joy** of making it together. **Feeling of belonging** to something and that someone there appreciates my work.
  - ...‡ *Of course I was **proud** and **happy** because of the success of Samuli and the whole team.*
-

- ...❖ **It feels good** if one has been able to help even with a small fraction to finish this big voluntary project.

---

- ...❖ *The core team's dream fulfilled after six year with gorgeous results, and **I enjoyed** watching their joy of success.*

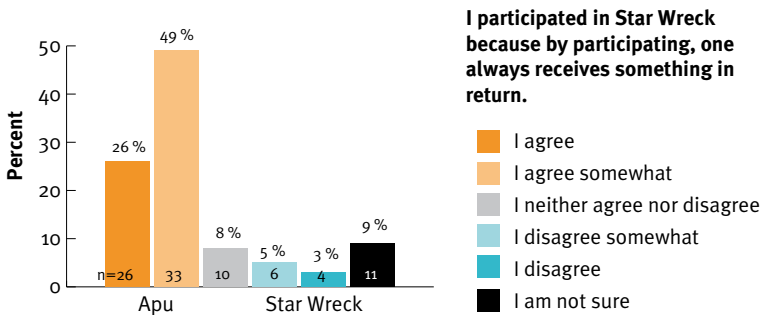
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- ...❖ **The feeling** of getting something ready. The experience and **the satisfaction**.

Producer, CEO Samuli Torssonen participated in the movie project for seven years. Torssonen says (Lietsala 2007b) the motivation was not an issue for himself until the half way of the project. Before that it had been just fun so the time went fast.

*– After the first half of the project there were some rougher moments but I just could not give up since it had wasted so much what was already done. I knew all the time and I believed that this will be a good thing since I had the vision how the movie will approximately look like at the end.*

*– And, of course, i had the inane need to show to all disbelievers that this will be ready and it will be a good one. There are always plenty of people to laugh at your ideas. they never avast.*



**FIGURE 7.** Remuneration motivates people.

When one looks at how to motivate people to join a community in the first place, it seems that existing social networks have the power to help with this task. In Star Wreck's case, 43.8% of the people who answered the questionnaire said they had heard about the project for the first time from their friends.

When we asked the people to directly make a stand on whether they participated in Star Wreck because their friends did too, 39.4 % (n=50) disagreed totally or somewhat with the statement. Yet, almost as many, 37.8 % (n=48) agreed or somewhat agreed that they had participated because their friends participated in the project, too.

The core team did not arrange any specific online groups according to the tasks or topics, but everything was handled more or less on the same discussion board of Star Wreck. Yet half of the Star Wreckers (50.8 %, n=66) felt they had belonged to a certain group in Star Wreck, because the group members were already their friends.

In the light of these results, a web community developer should find the core nodes that will not just invite the rest of the network to join the community, but who perhaps also have a role to foster the community and give a reason to stay in the network.

In general, those people who wanted to participate in collaborative movie productions found the Star Wreck project more precious than those people who did not know if they would like to participate in the collaborative movie productions later or not (Kruskal Wallis test 0.14).

What was ravishing to notice was that project managers valued the Star Wreck project only slightly more important than the occasional by-passers did. The average grade was 2 from managers and 1.91 from the occasional by-passers. In fact, even half of the project managers evaluated that the project was not important at all (grade 1) and yet all of them told they would like to participate in a new similar collaborative movie production.

The discussers' grade was 4.00, occasional developers gave 3.88 and



active by-passers settled with 3.56. Even passive by-passers thought Star Wreck was rather important (average 3.19).

It did not make a difference to the importance of the community whether the person had seen other people off the Internet or not (Kruskal Wallis test 0.092, no correlation according to the  $\chi^2$  test either), but as seen from above, the role changed the experience people had had, and how important the individuals evaluated the project to be to themselves.

One explanation could be that the managers were interested in the community to achieve their goals, to look how it works and to get inspiration, ideas and help, but in overall the project was more of a challenge or work for them and at the same time they had other important things going on in their lives.

Movie director Timo Vuorensola described the situation in the interview (Lietsala 2007a):

*– I am not a sci-fi nerd so it (the online community) was not perhaps as important to me as some other communities.*

Another possible reason is that during the survey some of the managers participated already in the new movie project called IronSky which perhaps made Star Wreck appear less important.

Producer, CEO Samuli Torssonen listed the third reason as he mentioned the culture of depreciation of one's own actions (Lietsala 2007b).

*– Perhaps we ourselves have never seen Star Wreck as something special. It is the Finnish attitude, the way to think that it was just a hobby like any other, but for the average person who did not participate in the project the work is perhaps something to appreciate more, Torssonen suggests.*

Movie director, core member Timo Vuorensola has evaluated that the online community of Star Wreck did somewhat dilute after the movie

production ended because the project was ready and there was no new movie project ahead.

*– Even so, the Star Wreck is a community on the intellectual level and to more people than we know. The Raven logo and this whole case has turned into, well, like the Linux community. Naturally, it is not as big, but it represents so much to the individuals that they identify themselves as the Star Wreck people. They use our outfits, dig our movie and spread the word.*

According to Vuorensola, the community is autonomous. After the movie launch, it has began to arrange its own parties and people develop independently their own things.

*– The community concentrated on us and on our movie is not so strong anymore, but Star Wreck has transformed from the mere community into a some sort of a brand. Brand has a negative sound, i would like to find another way to say it. Well, what do you call it when people want to wear Linux t-shirts? When they want to state something, when it shows the basic attitude. Star Wreck is “beyond community”, more like a phenomenon, Vuorensola pondered (Lietsala 2007a).*

## —Notions of the challenges

We asked in the survey what worries people in collaborative movie productions. The list below shows the topics people (n 43) noted:

- 
- ...✚ Money (n 13)
  - ...✚ Not enough time (n 10)
  - ...✚ Managing the project (n 8)
  - ...✚ Project abortion before final results (n 6)
  - ...✚ Failure in co-operation (n 5)
  - ...✚ Copyrights (n 6)
  - ...✚ Own reputation and honor (n 4)
- 

Here are some general ideas to come over these challenges:

- 
- ...✚ Clear agreement on the production model, how possible revenues will be shared and who owns the rights.
  - ...✚ Create tools and platform loose enough to meet the needs of your community.
  - ...✚ The tools offered in this space should support independent working, yet make the management possible.
  - ...✚ Give your project a face or faces, persons who answer questions, build contacts, encourage and guide the participants.
  - ...✚ Remember to nurture the discussions and not just to answer, but to react based on the feedback your community gives.
  - ...✚ Operate with small tasks that are easy to handle and not so risky if the volunteers cannot make the tasks ready on time or at all.
  - ...✚ Volunteers do not work for you; they participate because they want to. Give them a common goal.
  - ...✚ Remember to give thanks and credits to the participants so that they know their effort is appreciated and also their rights endorsed.

...❖ Build trust, make contributing fun.

...❖ Keep your vision. It maybe rough but if you do not believe in what you do, neither will the others.

---

In general, the collaborative productions face the risk of not being found. Without the active talented participants platform stays empty no matter how cool the technology is.

# 8.

## Open innovation, idea management and new R&D

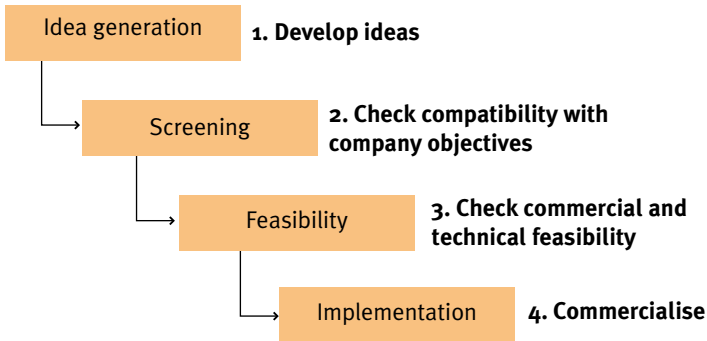
In this chapter, we will look at the open innovation phenomenon and illustrate how challenging it is to capture creativity of crowds, customers and employees.

### **The innovation management process**

Couger (1995) sees creativity central in all phases of the innovation process: in generating an idea, in developing the idea, in turning the idea to product/service and finally, in protecting results. Both companies and web communities should also be able to support those adaptors that turn someone else's idea seed into an actual innovation.

Establishing a systematic process to capitalize on creativity is an essential capability for enterprises operating in an accelerated business environment. A seeming paradox of innovation is that the most useful ideas originate from a structured process rather than random occurrences of creativity (Rozwell, 2002).

Innovation process in organizations has been described as an entity where ideas are evaluated and accepted ideas are developed to products and marketed.



**FIGURE 8.** The Innovation Process (Majaro, 1988)

Many current initiative systems and innovation competitions in use in organizations utilize this kind of approach. The screening and feasibility phases in the figure are sensitive, both from the evaluation and time management perspectives.

Hargadon and Sutton (1997, 717) illustrate these difficulties in timing:

*Valuable solutions seldom arrive at the same time as the problems they solve, they seldom arrive to the people working on those problems, and they seldom arrive in forms that are readily recognizable or easily adaptable.*

Within innovation communities and even in Web 2.0, many services are launched as betas. Often, the community decides on which functions and services are valuable. In that sense, customers and crowds play an important role in the screening and feasibility phases. For this reason, figure 4 from Majaro is no more relevant to all companies.

The problem is that many company managers confuse what open innovation actually signifies, and, in addition, they do not know how to manage it (Hagel & Seely Brown 2006, 4–5).

### **A definition for open innovation**

The focus of companies' innovation operations has traditionally been in closed and protected activities as demonstrated by the large research and development (R&D) departments of companies. Now, the whole innovation process is opening and external actors are seen as a crucial part of companies' innovation capability.

Open innovation is a paradigm that assumes that firms can and should use external ideas as well as internal ideas, and internal and external paths to market, as they look to advance their technology (Chesbrough, 16, 2006).

West and Gallagher (2006) define open innovation as systematically encouraging and exploring a wide range of internal and external sources for innovation opportunities, consciously integrating that exploration with firm capabilities and resources, and broadly exploiting those opportunities through multiple channels.

### **Customers participating in the R&D cycle**

To invoke user interest and creativity, companies utilize certain design tools and toolkits. Users interested in designing their own products want to do it efficiently. Manufacturers can therefore attract them to kits of design tools that ease their product development tasks and to products that can serve as “platforms” upon which to develop and operate user developed modifications. (von Hippel, 2005, 128)

To be able to maximize the efficiency of individuals' innovation, it has been found that collective thinking is in an important role (e.g. Hargadon and Beckhy, 2006; Thrift, 2006). In literature, there are examples of toolkits for both user innovation (Hippel 2005) and for mass customization (Franke and Piller, 2003).

Thrift (2006, 279) describes the needs behind those toolkits that companies provide for their customers:

*Companies may offer various toolkits for collaboration and masscustomisation, which can be seen here as devices supporting collective mind and distributed cognition. The establishment of distributed cognition devices, intended to organize real life experiments as preferences, tends to blur habitual distinctions between production, distribution and consumption.*

These distributed cognition devices by Thrift (2006) are not new. They often originate from the mass-customisation field, as the following example demonstrates:

*Interaction systems for customer integration are the primary instrument to reduce costs by shifting certain design tasks from the locus of the manufacturer to the locus of the customer, who can apply their need-related information directly without costly transfers to the producer. Known as configurators, choice boards, design systems, toolkits, or co-design-platforms, these systems provide customers with sufficient "manufacturing related information" and guide the user through the co-design process of expressing their needs and wishes in a usable format (Piller et al., 2004)*

So, these toolkits are often developed for mass-customisation purposes, but they can be applied to open innovation purposes as well. Intermediaries are the players who introduce these toolkits to communities.



## Intermediaries and Innovation Markets

Intermediary is defined as “Acting or of the nature of action between two persons, parties, etc.; serving as a means of interaction; mediatory.” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2007). Intermediaries and intermediate markets are also terms used by Henry Chesbrough (2003, 2006a, 2006b) in connection to the Open Innovation paradigm.

Intermediate markets are markets in which an upstream supplier licenses its know-how and intellectual property to downstream developers and producers. In intermediate market situations, different ingredients for business success (the idea itself, the critical development, manufacturing and distribution assets, the intellectual property [IP](#)) may all lie in different hands. (Chesbrough, 2006a, 4)

Intermediate markets alter the incentives for innovation, and also condition the mode of entry of new technologies and new firms into an industry (Gans, Hsu & Stern, 2001).

Here, we present two examples of intermediaries:

### —CrowdSpirit

CrowdSpirit (<http://www.crowdsprite.com>) focuses on electronics design. The CrowdSpirit company originates from France. Many users would like to design and innovate tailor-made gadgets and get them manufactured for themselves. The founders and maintainers of CrowdSpirit have built toolkits for users to submit their designs and ideas. Similarly, CrowdSpirit includes tools for commenting and voting on different designs.

For visualization, CrowdSpirit provides mindmaps which illustrate product ideas with proposed features. Winning designs will be even funded by members of the community and after prototyping and beta testing, the completed products will be delivered to market. In a sense, Crowd-

sourcing acts a mediator between enthusiastic users and manufacturing companies.

—FellowForce

FellowForce (<http://www.fellowforce.com>) is an innovation marketplace and an intermediary that enables companies to submit innovation challenges to solvers. The origin of FellowForce is in the Netherlands and in Poland. Solvers can be individuals and groups. Solvers provide suggestions (pitches) to a challenge and the best solvers are rewarded.

Unlike other services, like InnoCentive (<http://www.innocentive.com>) and **NineSigma** (<http://www.ninesigma.net>), FellowForce allows solvers to submit their own pitches to companies.

Normally, the best pitches that match those challenges are rewarded with money. However, the collective creativity is realised in the Innovate Us functionality of FellowForce. This functionality allows any company or organisation to use FellowForce as an open suggestion management system (Fairbank & Williams, 2001). Any registered participant may submit an innovation but also view the responses of other users, if this feature is turned on.

These two intermediaries plus an additional one, called **Owela**, were evaluated by Antikainen et al. (2008):

*According to our results, it seems that rewarding systems definitely increase participation, but not collaboration. Our cases indicate that other tools, as the ability to comment others designs and suggestions are more effective in enhancing creativity. What is needed are tools that are easy to use allowing people also to express themselves and tell more about them. It seems to be important that maintainers' are involved as visible members of a community also telling about their persons in a more detailed way. (Antikainen et al., 2008)*

What are, then, the requirements for intermediaries? According to Chesbrough (2006b):

*Being an innovation intermediary is not an easy business.*

There are 5 challenges for intermediaries:

- 
1. How can the intermediary help its clients define the problem that needs to be solved? This definition must be sufficiently clear to outsiders, so that they can recognise whether they know enough to answer the problem, without being so clear as to reveal sensitive client information?

---

  2. How to manage the problem of identity: whether and when to disclose the identity of one party to the other party?

---

  3. How to demonstrate the value of their service to their clients. Other processes, beyond the control of the intermediary, must occur in order for an idea or technology to become valuable, so how can one measure the contribution for the intermediary to whatever value was subsequently created?

---

  4. How to create or access a two-sided market, with lots of buyers and lots of sellers?

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  5. How to establish a strong, positive reputation early on in the company's operation?
- 

(Chesbrough 2006b, 139-140).



# 9.

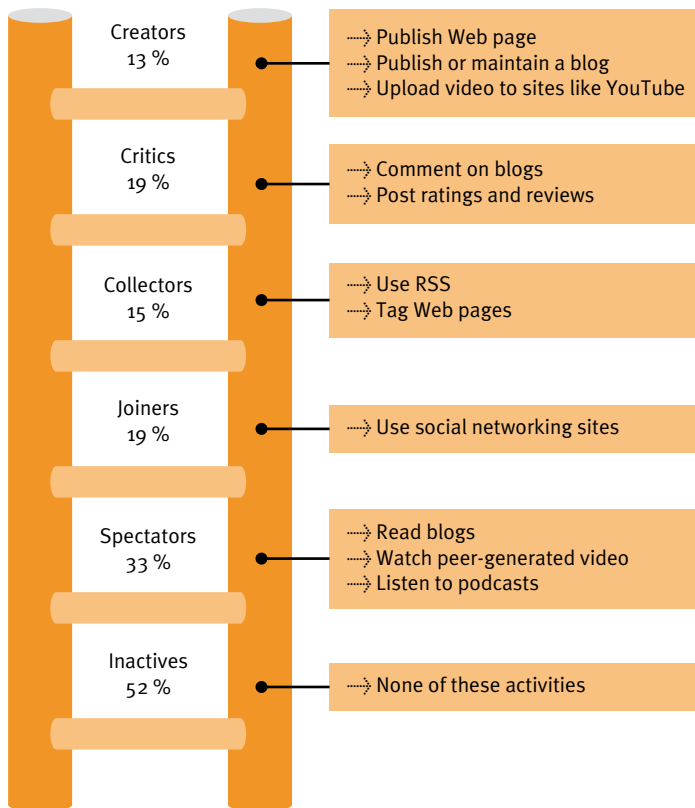
## New forms of content production and journalistic practices

According to many researchers, the social dynamics of networks on the web follow broadly the so called power law (more, for example, in Barabási 2002 or Benkler 2006).

The power law means that, for example, in the blogosphere the great majority of links between blogs are concentrated on the few most active bloggers, to the so called A-list of weblog writers. Also, when analyzing the amount of activities that people take part in on the www, the same kind of emphasis can be found.

The “participation ladder” offers interesting figures about the social networking of US adult online consumers, reported in 2006 by Forrester Research. (Li 2007)

According to the results, only 13 percent of the US adult online consumers published a web page or a blog or uploaded content to sites like YouTube (they are on the top ladder, called Creators). The following 19 percent of the adults commented on blogs or posted ratings or reviews (Critics), 15 percent used RSS or tagged Web pages (Collectors), 19 percent used social networking sites (Joiners), 33 percent read blogs or watched peer-generated video or listened to podcasts (Spectators).



Base: US adult online consumers. Segments include consumers participating in at least one of the indicated activities at least monthly.

**FIGURE 9.** Participation ladder based on Forrester's NACTAS Q4 2006 Devices & Access Online Survey. (Li 2007)

Over half of the adult online consumers did none of these activities in 2006 (Inactives) according to the Forrester Research survey.

It is obvious that in the future all members of the audience do not turn into active content creators or even commentators. It is most prob-

able that the most active 20 per cent of the audience will make most of the content, and the great majority remains as readers and consumers of media products.

Still, the situation is new – it is the first time millions of people have the tools and possibilities to create and publish their content to their friends and neighbors, or to a local, national, or even global audience to read and see.

No wonder the media companies have tried to develop strategies to deal with the new situation.

### **Collaboration processes**

It is obvious that the large audience is not going to transform into active content creators overnight. Also, the prophecies that the professional media and professional journalism would collapse because the amateur journalists take over the news field have so far turned out to be largely overstated.

Most people will not even want to write journalism or become journalists. But – and this is important – they want to tell their stories, share their content – photos, videos etc. with their peers. And more and more people have started to comment or contribute to the journalistic content creation in some ways.

What we are most likely to see in the future is that different kinds of practices are living and coexisting together, as Jenkins (2006) and Deuze (2006) have suggested.

The media industry is going through a turbulence. Jenkins calls this process *convergence* in his much quoted book *Convergence Culture*:

*Convergence, as we can see, is both top-down corporate-driven process and a bottom-up consumer driven process. Corporate convergence coexists with*

*grassroots convergence. Media companies are learning how to accelerate the flow of media content across delivery channels to expand revenue opportunities, broaden markets, and reinforce viewer commitments. Consumers are learning how to use these different media technologies to bring the flow of media more fully under the control and to interact with other consumers.* (Jenkins 2006, 18)

According to Jenkins, the co-existence of these two spheres is not necessarily peaceful. Sometimes, corporate media and grassroots content producers can reinforce each other, but sometimes, these two forces end up in conflict. That means a struggle about who has the right to define the process and who finally owns the contents.

Media companies have to modify their assumptions about their audience, but it is not a simple task with their long history of viewing the audience as something passive; as receivers instead of dynamic participants, as consumers instead of producers.

*If old consumers were predictable and stayed where you told them to stay, then new consumers are migratory, showing a declining loyalty to networks or media. If old consumers were isolated individuals, the new consumers are more socially connected. If the work of media consumers was once silent and invisible, the new consumers are now noisy and public.”* (Jenkins, 2006, 19)

The safe days of walled gardens are over according to the PEJ's State of the News Media 2008 report. For example, the New York Times announced in September 2007 it would no longer charge readers for online access to its opinion columnists. The situation has changed largely because readers are coming more and more indirectly, from search engines and links on other sites. The report quotes The New York Times:



*These indirect readers, unable to gain access to articles behind the pay wall and less likely to pay subscription fees than the more loyal direct users, were seen as opportunities for more page views and increased advertising revenue.*

PEJ's report of 2008 also tells us that newspapers in the U.S. have almost completely opened at least some parts of their sites for audience to reach through RSS feeds and to comment on and contribute to in various ways.

The Bivings Group, a communications firm that creates Internet programs, studied the Web sites of the top 100 highest circulation newspapers based on the Audit Bureau report. Among the findings was that:

- 
- ...✚ Virtually all (97 %) of the sites offered RSS. (...) Up from 76 % in 2006.
  - ...✚ Eighty-eight percent now allowed readers an opportunity to post comments on blogs hosted on newspaper sites, up from 67 % in 2006.
  - ...✚ More than a half (51%) included a most popular articles listing determined by reader usage, a number that increased from 33 % the year before.
  - ...✚ Forty-four percent offered readers the ability to bookmark news articles, compared to just 7 percent in 2006
  - ...✚ A third (33 %) allowed readers to make comments on news articles, up from 19% in 2006.
- 

So the traditional media is starting to transform from walled gardens to something new. The personalized content – which has been forecasted for years – makes its way in the form of RSS feeds.

According to the forecast of IBM professionally produced media content will be additionally available in open channels, without dedicated

access providers or devices. Public service media companies, like BBC with its My BBC interactive media service, lead the way in Europe (Berman et al. 2007).

Also the Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE plans to give all its programs freely to Finnish media companies to use on their channels and through their different technical platforms. According to the director general **Mikael Jungner** YLE tries to strengthen the Finnish culture based on Finnish language with this move (Luukka 2008).

Jungner's proposal has raised mixed reactions among the commercial media industry in Finland.

## **8 ways to collaborate**

Already in 2005, Steve Outing created a [list of layers](#) for media companies to help them to transform their production process to be more open for audience participation. Outing had 11 steps for adding citizen participation into media (news) content. We have reorganized Outing's ideas a bit to match the present strategies media companies could utilize to build their ways to interact with the audience.

The eight ways to organize the interaction between media organization and the audience is a list that starts from the nowadays familiar forms of interaction (journalists blogging or people sending their photos about certain news issues) which are followed by more demanding modes for all of the participants.

—Open the stories for comments, encourage journalists to blog and converse

Perhaps the easiest way to increase interaction with the audience is to allow comments. This means a comment box after all news items; a space

for reactions, critique, etc. about not just the news issues, but also comments to the journalist. In the best cases, comments lead to new stories and these stories raise new comments keeping the site alive.

Some journalists blog to have a conversation with the readers. That is perhaps the simplest solution, since there are already blogging tools easily available, and it does not require the whole staff's consent to go forward.

The editor could also tell in a blog about the work of the newsroom, adding transparency to the journalism: show why certain decisions are made.

Journalists can, of course, start their own blogs independently. One famous example is **Cris Allbritton**, a journalist-blogger who turned to his readers in order to get money for travel to Iraq. "*Send me money, I'll go to Iraq and cover the war*" he asked from his readers in 2002 (Gillmor 2004, 156). Thousands of readers collected nearly 15,000 dollars to cover the expenses and Allbritton was able to travel to Iraq. In 2008 he still works in the area and has his blog, [Back to Iraq](#) going.

In Finland, one of the foremost examples in the field of political journalism is the [Perässähihtäjä](#) blog in Helsingin Sanomat. Journalist **Unto Hämäläinen** succeeded in creating lively discussion about Finnish politics around elections. The task was not easy, but the execution went well since he was determined to keep up the conversation by answering to the comments sent to the blog. This was probably one of the reasons why the blog was liked. It was also a rather new thing to publish a political blog, to offer a channel even for open dispute.

Social media sites have personal profiles that differentiate, but also connect the members of the network. Media houses can use the same idea to help the interaction of journalists with the audience by designing professional profiles for the journalists. The process is very similar to blogging, with the difference that stories need not be blog posts, but the platform aggregates all person-related content from the site on the

journalist profile and as a feed to all the places where audience wants to take it.

That kind of a feature would help the readers to evaluate the potential stance of the journalist and also to easily search for other, as good or as bad, articles by the author. The personal journalist profile might add straight feedback from the readers to the journalist and possibly even leverage journalist ‘*celebrities*’ who have their own fans.

Perhaps that is a scary idea for the journalists? Media houses could measure their success by the amount of readers per article and the content of the comments received. Not an easy slice to swallow for the media houses either? If the journalist has plenty of fans, he or she might pull an “*Allbritton*” especially after micro payments become easier on the net.

—Give people channels to provide content and rate the stories

Media firms apply for stories, reports, photos and videos about certain news incidents from the people with easy-to-use e-forms or as multimedia messages sent from mobile phones. Usually, but not always, a fee is paid if the media company uses this kind of citizen content.

For example, AOL News has a selection of headlines from the “user submitted news” on its main page. Every story can also be graded with *Must read thumbs* and shared with email and instant messenger (IM).

Digg.com has called itself a “*user driven social content Web site*”. Users select, create and manage the content. The system works like this: A user – any user – posts new stories that appear in a simple column format. They are originally posted in chronological order, but users rate them as stories they either “dig” (like) or don’t like and want to bury further down the list. The list of stories constantly changes with the new posts and rankings. There is no editorial staff making the decisions or even determine what the page looks like. (The State of the media report 2007, 19)

The American Slashdot web site is self-moderated with good results. The highest-rated comments appear in the *Hall of Fame* of the site. The people who comment receive also good or bad *karma* (Bruns 2005). Unfortunately, openness comes with disadvantages that should be managed on the run before the contributors get too annoyed and leave the site. That troubles Slashdot, too.

*One of the unfortunate side-effects of the increasing popularity of Slashdot is that the number of trolls, flame-warriors and all-around lamers increases as well, and it only takes a relatively small number of them to make a lot of noise. (Slashdot 2000)*

One innovative social media example in Finland is [Oma kaupunki](#) (in English, Own City) by Helsingin Sanomat. The service is based on interactive map which collects the citizen's tacit knowledge about places and services. Anyone can share location oriented information about their favorite places to the map.

— Enhance open source reporting and make experiments with crowd-sourcing

With Outing's words: the term open source reporting is generally understood as a collaboration between a professional journalist and his/her readers on a story, where readers who are knowledgeable on the topic are asked to contribute their expertise, providing guidance to the reporter, or even actually reporting issues which will be included in the final journalistic product.

In Finland, one of the first examples of this type of collaborative work was made in November 2005 by journalist **Anssi Miettinen** in the

monthly magazine of Helsingin Sanomat. The topic of the story was blogging, which was, in those days, a rising trend in Finland.

Mr Miettinen started to blog and asked other bloggers to help him make the story. His blog, [Kuukausiliitteestä, päivää](#) became very hot in [the Finnish A-list of bloggers](#) for some time. The blog had 1,500 visitors a day and Miettinen got over 600 posts which he used in the making of the printed article ([Miettinen 2005](#)).

Open source reporting can also lead to the crowdsourcing of news – relying on the public even more, so that the people produce the content themselves. Professional journalists are left with the task of just collecting and maybe editing the outcome a bit. This approach has been experimented in various ways especially in the U.S. See, for example, [NewAssignment Net](#).

There is lots of discussion about the benefits and problems of this method; see, for example, **Jay Rosen's** critical summary after the [first experiment](#).

In Assignment Zero, Rosen summarises the results and lessons learned:

*Division of labor is the key creative decision in acts of distributed reporting. Grok (understand fully and thoroughly) the motivations of the volunteers or it can't be done. Watch for ballooning coordination costs as ramp up succeeds. Where the small pieces meet the larger narrative the alchemy of the project lives. Shared background knowledge raises group capacity. Extant communities already coordinate well.*

Rosen sees profound differences between professional and amateur work:

*This is one reason amateur production will never replace the system of paid correspondents. It only springs to life when people are motivated enough*

*to self-assign and follow through. Experience suggests that will happen spontaneously for a very limited range of stories.*

— Experiment Pro + amateur journalism on a larger scale

In media, the standard example of bottom-up self-organization has for years been [OhmyNews](#), a Korean news organization, which shows one important model in how to combine citizen created news and a professional news production and editing process. Founded in 2000, OhmyNews has grown rapidly. In 2006, it had more than 41,000 citizen contributors who collectively submit more than 200 written articles, photographs and videos every day. OhmyNews is a hybrid between professionals and amateurs. The permanent staff of 65 editors screens all citizen contributions and writes additional content (Sutton 2006).

Another often mentioned example is the American [Bluffton Today](#). The Bluffton Today web site offers people, for instance, the option to blog, a community calendar, container for photos and one's own profile to network with others, the fellow *Blufftonians*. Some of the news may be published on *the Bluffton Today newspaper*, a free daily paper that is delivered throughout the Bluffton area. Members of the community give the site right to copy their stories for free. The journalists also have the right to edit the stories.

[Global Voices](#) is a non profit blog service that covers stories that are collected from all over the world. The editors cull through a vast number of blogs around the world. The editors, who themselves are located across the globe, then decide which postings are worth passing on. Next, they add their own comments to put the entries into context. At the end, the entries are translated into English (State of the Newsmedia 2007)

A Finnish version with much smaller scale is taking place in Northern

Karelia, in the newspaper Karjalainen, which has a section called [Kylät](#) (villages) on its website. The content of the section is made mainly by volunteering amateur correspondents who write about the life in the villages on the surrounding countryside. The Karjalainen newsroom provides local news about the villages on the site specifically for the readers of Kylät.

### — Try wikijournalism

At this stage, the audience really is the editor. The most famous experiment is Wikinews, a wiki where anyone can be a journalist.

[Wikinews](#) is really an open forum for everyone to use. One can start with a simple template with which one is able to start the news writing. Just follow the instructions and you'll become a journalist!

Wikinews even has a detailed stylebook in which the approved journalistic guidelines are stated. The Wikinews Newsroom also offers possibilities for editing the news that are in the development phase. The list also informs on what issues are already in the process and forums on which to discuss with other wikijournalists.

Besides Wikinews, there are few examples of news production based on the wiki principle. Some of the early experiments in the U.S. newspapers were not that successful. In some cases, it became evident that if the theme of the wiki story is controversial, anonymous contributors are tempted to interpret the situation according to their own agenda and forget the claims for neutrality and balance.



—Support local citizen journalism sites

The local or regional media sites could be named as citizen media. **Jan Shaffer**, the director of J-Lab in the University of Maryland (Shaffer 2007) defines citizen media as bridged media, linking traditional media with forms of classic civic participation. The concept of a hyperlocal citizen media site broadly covers local or regional content that citizens produce to the internet, with or without the help of professional journalists or established media organizations.

Local or hyperlocal citizen media sites have become especially important in the U.S. In 2008, the expanding database included more than 450 U.S. citizen media sites, covering each of the 50 states.

There are only few Finnish examples that could be counted as this kind of local or regional citizen based sites. [Nopola News](#), the local website maintained by residents in a small village in Central Finland, Kyyjärvi, is one of the examples. Also, [Vaasalaisia.info](#) in the city of Vaasa or the older version of [Mansetori](#) in the city of Tampere could be mentioned here. Mansetori is a forum and content publishing site for people living in Tampere, Finland. The website was developed with residents groups and university researchers in several research projects (see [Sirkkunen & Kotilainen 2004](#) for more).

All in all, local citizen media can be important in creating local, citizen oriented content that would otherwise be lacking from the regional media content. The grassroots citizen media can thus feed ideas and stories to the more official media.

—Host a blog service or your own community

Some newspapers have been hosting a blog service for years. One of the first European major newspapers hosting a blogging site was Le Monde.

The starting of a blog site is simple, you just invite people to blog for it and offer a blog hosting service for them. With a free blog site you'll be able to follow what kind of themes people are feeling important enough to write about.

Another way is to invite interesting people to write blogs on your site. This restricted model is fairly common in Finnish newspapers, because it resembles very much the guest columnist model. Kauppalehti blogit or TalousSanomat Omasana can be mentioned here as examples of media houses that have their free blog sites for everyone to use.

A group blog with selected volunteers can also be an interesting option as the case study in this research about the Image blog shows.

One interesting Finnish phenomenon on this field is the blog portal Bloggen.fi, which has rapidly become very popular among the Swedish-speaking Finns living in Ostrobotnia, the northwestern coast of Finland. The region has a Swedish speaking population. Bloggen.fi was founded by a journalist and blogging pioneer **Lotta Axén-Back** (maiden name Lappinen) as an experiment in the summer of 2006.

Bloggen is a joint project of three regional newspapers Vasabladet, Jakobstads Tidning and Syd-Österbotten, with a total amount of 1,600 bloggers in the spring of 2008. To get some idea of the popularity of the portal, it can be mentioned that Vasabladet's circulation is around 25,000.

Vasabladet is the biggest newspaper published in Swedish in the area. It can be added that in 2006, Finland had a Swedish speaking minority of some 290,000 persons.

Here we have Lotta Lappinen's own story about the start of the project and the phases that Bloggen.fi has gone through. Although the days of fast growth are gone, there is lots to develop in order to keep things going.

*When I discovered the concept of blogging it was love at first sight. Having tried blogging on my own for a while I realized that if you're not seen, you don't exist. I'd only managed to find a couple of other blogging Swedish*

*speaking Finns, scattered around varying blogportals. Lobbying for our own portal was hard work and for a long time met nothing but silence from the management of HSS Media (owners of Vasabladet, Syd-Österbotten and Jakobstads Tidning). Blogging was considered the pastime of frustrated housewives, nothing a serious newspaper publisher should promote or engage in.*

*As both the number of bloggers and visitors on bloggen.fi continued to increase our publisher started to see the project as a business opportunity. The journalist staff to this day continues to be split between two camps; those who still consider blogging frivolous and entertaining at best, and those who respect and appreciate the new social media as an opportunity to communicate with and learn from the readers.*

*In November 2007 I was awarded by the foundation of Swedish culture in Finland-price on Svenska dagen for creating a new platform for debate and communication in Swedish. This recognition helped me realize that we'd seen a need, answered to it and created something unique.*

*Working with bloggen.fi has taught us a lot about social media, insights that have been most useful when building our other sites for reader generated content.*

*I'd imagined that bloggen.fi could become the blogging portal for a few hundred Swedish speaking Finns. That goal was reached within two days of the start of bloggen.fi. Many politicians and political debaters discovered blogging during the parliamentary election in spring 2007, but at that point we had engaged over 1.000 bloggers on bloggen.fi. The campaigning for the coming municipal elections in autumn 2008 will in my opinion largely happen in blogs and other social media.*

*I believe that 1.600 bloggers is maybe as many as we will continue to be on bloggen.fi. New bloggers sign up every day, and old ones quit. Still, we might see a renaissance in interest after this summer because of the municipal elections.*

*We continue to develop bloggen.fi, with new functions for the bloggers and a tilt towards community thinking. As a blogging portal bloggen.fi works well, now we need to answer to our users requests for better technical possibilities. All of this is work in progress.*

(Lappinen 2008)

## —Open your interface for users and partners

If some of the social media sites and communities have open interfaces, why is it that traditional media companies do not? Even if the interface might not be promoted as open, the partnership could be still negotiable. The media companies should notice that it might really be easier to be based on already existing communities than to start to build one's own from scratch.

If an open interface application design seems too difficult with all the multiple choices it offers, chop the goal into smaller pieces you can adjust.

Start from the content, without leaving your own premises. Design the website in a way that supports taking the tasty bites to some other sites. It benefits your firm with brand visibility and links back to your own site bringing old and new visitors.

An easy start is to check what kinds of feeds the customers would like to have. One becomes 'a social media' not by offering one feed of the latest news. The structure should be at least as comprehensive as the end product or service is.

## Changes in the roles

content (professional)	audience (passive)	publisher	journalist (gate-keeper)
news, reports	readers, watchers, listeners	ads, subs, managing	newsmakers, editors
comments, critique	conversationalists	ads, subs, managing	idea collectors, opinion amplifiers
photos, videos	witnesses	managing, providing resources	(pre)editors, publishers
special information	assistants, project co-workers	managing, resources	project leaders, editors
blog post, reports	amateur reporters	managing, resources	moderators, professional mentors
blogs, videos	creators, sharers	technical res.	(post) moderators
content (amateur)	audience (active contributors)v	facilitator	media worker(gate opener)

**TABLE 2.** The changing roles of audience, publisher and journalist.

When the prevailing professional journalism still mainly sees the audience as passive and the journalists as the gatekeepers of the public life, there is lots of room for rethinking. The formerly passive lot has started to comment on the news and journalistic blogs; send photos, videos, and useful information to the journalists, which transforms the work and the role of journalists. It makes them merely co-editors and mentors instead of authors making the story on their own.

The new situation means changes especially to the professional self understanding of journalists. This transformation process has been going on for years, especially in the U.S. where the newspaper industry has been seeking new business models from the net.

Journalists' new professional roles in publishing and editing user generated content have been called for example participation architects (Bowman& Willis 2005). Deuze (2007) predicts that the differences be-

tween journalism and other kinds of media work like advertising are slowly vanishing. So the professional identity of the journalist will eventually move closer to the one of media worker.

The opening process means changes in the power hierarchy of the journalistic publishing process and also new kinds of roles for the audience, publishing institution and journalists. We have collected some of these trends into a typology which shows how the new types of interaction cause changes in the various roles of the production process.

The typology of content and collaboration processes between the audience, publishers and journalists is shown on the chart in Table 2. Below are the open media or social media genres and content. On the left column are the different types of content that lead to new competences for journalists or media workers to master (on the right).

The traditional one way model of content production is at the top of the chart. That includes professional content like news and reports consumed by the audience and published in mass media. The content is created and produced by professional journalists. This production mode leaves the audience in a consuming role.

When the former audience starts publicly comment on the stories or leave comments in the blogs of journalists, the omniscient position of the journalist is challenged. On the other hand, journalists gain much in this process. They can collect new ideas coming from the grassroots level, continue the stories and amplify opinions and voices that have something new to say about the issue in question.

When people start to send in photos and videos on a large scale, the role of journalists transforms from story telling into the role of editors who are making the choices on what to publish and seeing to it that the content does not violate, for example, the laws on privacy.

When a journalistic institution opens a blog site open for all to write about what they want, the role of gate keeping turns into gate opening (Carpentier 2006). The role of the journalists turns into something new

when maintaining the site and taking off some offending content.

As people take part in some project the journalists arrange – say, to gather and provide background information about an issue that journalist works with – the member of audience turns into a co-worker working in the same project with the journalist. Although the journalist is still responsible of the content, the collaborator does have more to say to the outcome as compared to, for example, only commenting on it after the story gets published.

When the eager collaborator starts blogging or sending in reports, for example, about it on a more regular basis, the role of journalists changes into moderators or perhaps professional mentors.

All in all, the professional role of journalists should include more varieties in collaborating with the “former audience”. At the lower end, when the work has more to do with just to facilitating the site technically and maintaining and keeping the content creating community active, it is far from the traditional work of journalists. Maybe we should call these “former journalists” just media workers?

# 10.

## Technologies that enable contributions

Social software is published as [beta versions](#) and that sign may stay on for a long period of time, even though the firm has developed the service better and it is ready, stable and has multiple features to enjoy. Web 2.0 site owners implement rather fast, publish already in the test phase and give user support for customers to handle with the possible flaws because of the not-yet-ready-nor-stable site.

Since there is no obligation to maintain different versions of the code, firms can use the remaining resources for distribution and testing of the newest version. They do not have to pay attention to whether the developed code of the software works with earlier user versions, since users most likely have adopted the version on the web and have no installations on their own PCs or laptops.

However, the more the platform or application works over open interfaces, the more its developers need to pay attention to the fact that the interfaces still work if the code changes either on the firm's own server or on the external services one tries to collaborate with.

The internet makes possible the [iterative development](#) of [agile systems](#). It is rather economical to publish only a small amount of changes, and if the change does not appeal to the audience, it can be taken down.



Since new versions are public almost right away, competitors can copy these and take the same advantages of the features that seem to be the most suitable for their businesses. To beat someone in this kind of market means that the technical feature is not necessarily enough to lure the biggest market share, but it is the amount and activity of the people the platforms manage to invite to use the service.

Many social media website owners maintain their own **development or enterprise blog** where they tell about the upcoming news or answer to the feedback from the target group.

Open user interfaces are another trend in social software. Instead of making everything on your own, firms open up their interfaces. Just think about the 16,000 applications Facebook has managed to lure from external developers. Surely, not all are gold nor in daily use, but still.

**An open interface** does not instantly mean huge success. First of all, the developers need to design an interface that makes it possible for the add-on functionality to really support the core technology.

If one limits the interface too much, no one figures out what to do with the platform. On the other hand, if the platform allows too much, it results in a chaos that may put at risk the entire user experience and usability of the site.

When designed well, the add-on application designers get new users for their own services and the original site, the host, receives value added services for its participants without consuming its own resources.

**Mash-ups** are another web trend. A typical example of a mash-up is a website that combines maps from GoogleMaps and content from either its own resources or from the feeds offered by other websites.

For example, [Flickrvision](#) combines a photo stream from the photo sharing site Flickr to a map, and Huffington Post's [FundRace 2008](#) shows location-based information about the donors who have supported presidential candidates.

**Aggregators** combine content as feeds by using techniques like RSS

(Really Simple Syndication) and Atom.

If one takes a closer look at the code, Ajax (Asynchronous javascript and xml) seems to be a popular answer to the social software architects. It combines the old techniques like dynamic HTML, CSS, XML and JavaScript.

Also, Ruby On Rails and Python are getting more popular but both still have such a short history that the lack of peer support is evident.

# 11.

## Conclusions

We have suggested that the change in technology and the new form of web sites and applications based on social software, referred sometimes also to as Web 2.0, are significantly changing the models of content creation, dissemination and publishing – and not just the online user interfaces and ways to network.

Social media is an umbrella term that covers various and different user based practices. The most typical features of it today are social networks linked to single profile pages, tagged content, distribution through feeds and the immediate possibility to comment on and review the content available. Social media is based on social software, but social software alone is not yet a media. It needs to have the content and the users first.

People utilize the social media systems in many ways: for digital content creation, consumption and sharing without necessarily any revenues out of their actions.

When looking for the typical features of social media, one should notice that the social media sites most likely have free access, but obligatory registration. Before one has a personal profile, she or he cannot support the social interaction within the community or the social network as well as with a profile content and people can be linked with.

The media firms have taken social media into their strategies and finally as part of their core businesses. Those who haven't will have a struggle ahead.

### **Problematic concept, problematic genres**

We defined social media into six main genres. The genres are content creation and publishing tools, content sharing sites, social network sites, collaborative productions, virtual worlds and add-ons. The task was not an easy one.

What makes it hard to categorize social media is that it is used to refer to very different kinds of practices that are even still developing – and very fast. The genre definition was also a tough task to handle since so many of the social media sites overlap.

For example, most of the publishing tools can be used to build communities. Bloggers build networks with links and comments. Photo sharing networks use Flickr as their community tool. Now, with the rapidly developing add-on widgets, the users turn some service into a container for contents and use another service for building the actual networks, whereas others can take the container site as a community, since they have not joined any separate social network site.

To be able to limit the amount of main genres, we were forced to add, for example, the bookmark and annotation sites, as well as idea markets, under 'content sharing sites'. That might be too rough, but on the other hand, it gives us the possibility to develop sub-genres under the main genres. That is something to develop in further studies.

The reason why one of the genres is 'collaborative productions' is that we wanted to respect the sites which have a nature built on not only sharing, but developing a better end-result together and intentionally.

The fact that traditional media has also adopted some of the social

media genres like the podcasts and blog messages to disseminate their journalistic content makes the picture even more blurred. For this reason, one cannot say that all social media is solely based on user-created content, if the word ‘user’ refers to private persons that are not employed to participate.

It remains yet to be seen whether the term social media will establish itself as a stable concept in the discourse about media. Another option is that it is replaced by more detailed and narrow new terms.

One might ask whether everything is collaborative in social media, or at least collective? We came up with the conclusion that not everything is collaborative, or even social in social media. Some people use social media tools for purposes that were not planned at all by the service developers. For example, some utilize the tools just for their personal needs, sharing only the minimum and keeping their content and actions private.

Again, further research will perhaps enlighten us on how many people, which kind of persons and in what type of situations actually behave in unpredicted ways in social media and what are the actual consequences of the behavior.

Despite the problems, we have hopefully succeeded in pointing out at least that there is a great variety of different practices within the social media concept and that the social media sites can be tentatively, if not otherwise, separated as genres based on their core activities.

It is clear that we depict here only practices that were visible during 2006 and 2007, so the list of genres is not permanent. We predict it will evolve very rapidly, but at least for now, we have some terms to describe the large web phenomenon called social media.

## Use value and exchange value

The concept of participation economy turned out to be as slippery and unclear as social media or other web 2.0 buzzwords. Participation economy can be understood simply as an extension of monetary economy in the field of social media. This means that participatory economy is all the data, services, content and products that can be turned into commodities and monetized out of social media.

However, this does not say much about the nature of participation, which is of course another side of the concept. We tried to develop a deeper understanding about this concept, also from the participation perspective.

We think that participatory economy is based on use-value being created for a community of users. The activity is often pleasurable or meaningful in and of it. When the social activity and interaction accumulates, it brings use-value for the participant and creates something new; an additional value for others; to the people, to the design, for the owner of the site or the stakeholders related. This process and its result coin the core of participatory economy.

Jeff Howe (2006) introduced on Wired the term *crowdsourcing*. The term is part of the participatory economy ideology where the firms take the participants of their web sites as a resource. As Scholtz (2008) sums up the situation:

*Online, service platforms, rather than products are offered and users are encouraged to participate, communities become the brand. The Web makes it possible to “out-source” many tasks to the users who can create in “self-service” mode.*

There is still important discussion waiting about the added value that participatory economy is based on and how much the commercialization

of everything affects on our culture, on our identities and private lives. Not to mention what it does to the future web.

*Market exchanges are, to be sure, necessary to any society but the dominating market ideology elevates them to complete dominance. This ideological imperative that affords little or no visibility to visions of unmarketed space, for example, severely limits visions of a future World Wide Web.”*  
(Scholtz 2008)

It is clear that social media brings revenue to companies operating in this field. At this stage, it seems that people who participate in social media accept the fact that they receive little or no pay for their contributions. They settle for it perhaps since the platform, tools and content are mainly for free and since they enjoy the participation.

We witness a new situation, where “The means of production are available to the networked publics, these tools and platforms are, however, owned by corporations.” (Scholtz & Hartzog 2008)

As long as it does not feel like working, no one expects to be paid? This way, the participants creating the participatory value do not see themselves as being exploited. Perhaps they even are not. This is somewhat a political and cultural question; whether the model *is that, or whether it only feels like* the owner of the site and the participants were equals.

If this equality turns out to be an illusion, there may be room for a “socialist” movement within social media as Suoranta and Vadén have suggested. “Socialist” media means here social media tools and platforms that are owned, maintained and managed by the community of users itself. Examples of this kind of self-management are many, at least inside the hacker community (Suoranta & Vadén 2008) .

There is also a growing demand for accountability. The social media organizations should be open about their business models and make visible which kind of data is actually collected of the users and their actions.

The people are entitled to know how their content is going to be used or utilized already, and what happens to the information that the companies save about the users.

In some cases, it is even unclear what happens to all the data gathered after the user decides to no longer belong to the social media site. This is alarming. In a society that is ruled by “*good cops and reasonable government*” the problem perhaps does not look like a risk. Yet, if the stability breaks down and you face new rules, it might challenge our freedom, even our lives.

For example, Yahoo, the American Internet search company, elicited information in 2004 to the authorities in China that helped them to convict a Chinese journalist to 10 years in prison. The Chinese court thought the anonymous comment Mr Shi had sent to a web site was too offensive. The conviction was possible since Yahoo gave access to his Yahoo e-mail account. ([Kahn 2005](#))

Now, what happens after all your personal data is online, maintained by commercial social media sites that want to be in good relationships with the regulators who can limit or promote their global business? The future might not be such a pretty picture, no matter how participatory it is.

What seems to be private might not be private tomorrow. That is the side effect everyone should acknowledge and to which we need policies that give people control over their own information, even though the data was saved in external archives held by the companies.

Who owns the information, has the power. In return for free social media services, one might give too much freedom to the private corporations that handle our content. The firms know our data has exchange value. Sadly, we ourselves do not pay enough attention to the value of our lives, habits and thoughts that we track for the companies.



## Different dynamics of participation

Next, we share some observations about the dynamics of participation processes based on the case studies carried out in this project.

Our case studies – the invited bloggers of Image magazine, the citizen reporters in Apureportterit and the collaborative production of Star Wreck – show the different roles people take when they participate in social media. All these cases had specific designs that differentiated them from each other and limited or expanded the participation.

Image arranged blogs with a closed model, since it accepted bloggers by invitation only. The advantage of this kind of policy is that the owner of the site can rely on the authors to post more or less regularly, resembling the work ethics of media professionals. One of the disadvantages of this model is that not necessarily the best bloggers appear to participate and the bloggers stay more reserved because of the formality and expectation, even unwritten, to endorse professionalism.

Although the main motivation for participators in all the case studies was self expression, there may be differences in expectations on what is going to happen in the long run. When participating in a project organized by a media company, some may hope that their work turns into references to help in getting hired, or to push stories into the actual magazine published outside of the web.

With A-lehdet, that would be more likely than in Star Wreck. Star Wreck had only students and no known brand when the production began. No one even knew exactly how long it would take to make a movie together!

Thanks from the core team and comments on the content offered was the fastest response the Star Wreck volunteers received during the years. Apu offered publication shortly after participation. Perhaps also for this reason, self-expression was emphasized more in A-Lehdet cases than in Star Wreck where people spent time, not just ‘published’.

Apu magazine's site Apureportterit had a very traditional moderation process which reminds letters to the editor policy seen in traditional media. So Apureportterit was not too open and participatory as a forum, though it was open for stories that anyone was able to send.

Apu selected the semi-closed model obviously to be on the safe side, since the authors could have whatever agenda and writing skills from poor to excellent. Limiting publishing rights was also a tool to limit potential lawsuits and maintain some sort of quality for stories published under the Apu brand.

In the Apureportterit case the lack of editing resources led to a slow publishing pace, which again aroused a lot of criticism from the reporters' side.

The Star Wreck case had the most open participation model in the online community, since everyone was allowed to participate and publish content. People discussed in an online forum to develop the project further; the same policies were adapted as discussion groups have in general.

However, it was a surprise to notice that as much as Star Wreck was a collaborative project in content and feedback gatherings and in the production-related practical tasks, it had almost as restrictive a process in the movie production as Apureportterit utilized for the stories on their site.

Though people could provide content to the Star Wreck movie openly without restrictions, no entry into the movie was decided on collectively or made without a decision by the project owner, Samuli Torssonen. This is the enlightened dictator model. The leader encourages participation, but sorts out which results will be further developed, and, at the end, the leader decides which of the parts to combine into the final end product or service.

## Management and hierarchies are inevitable

Perhaps whenever there is need for the final public outcome and the content has to pass some requirements, management is needed. No matter if the media is social or not?

Even in Wikipedia, someone already trusted by the core network can take the control over content and moderate it, though the trustee does not necessarily have the best skills and knowledge to do so in every case. As a participant of the site, he or she has enough history to be a known member and enough prior positive results to give personal credibility and therefore the right to moderate.

In Star Wreck, Torssonen was able to build the authority status because he was the owner of the original idea and had the charisma and will that was needed to stay in charge of things. During the years, the status became an established one; something that had existed, and therefore was.

The same happened to the Star Wreck core team. As one of the interviewed team members pointed out; at first, it was easier to get into the core team, but when the project got further, it became harder and harder when the structure of the team changed from flexible and open into a more closed one with authority and trust.

From a participant's point of view, this means that devotion and participation as a known member of the community is essential. Without the trust (social capital, social recognition) you are merely a part of the masses that have the right and possibility to participate, but yet no actual power.

So, all forms of social media does not bluntly empower people or support total openness. To think otherwise is dangerous.

For example, in Star Wreck, the owner of the idea Samuli Torssonen built up strong leadership in the project and the selected model was perhaps more of an enlightened dictator than democracy or open and free

culture. However, the access was open, allowing anyone to take part in the discussions and publish content without editing. Nothing just appeared in the movie without approval from Torssonen.

The intent itself grew gradually from a short clip into a full-length movie, while the team grew from a bunch of people into a community of 3,000 people when the project developed further. It was evident that the team was poor and could not pay for the work.

But money was not the reason for the people to participate, instead, the driving force was a common goal and having fun and something meaningful to accomplish on the way. The positive flow effect took over the people for years.

The Star Wreck team was not a known formal organization so people had no company brand or label to base their assumptions on, like in the Image and Apureportterit cases. However, in those days when it was not so fun to participate anymore, the core team of Star Wreck could not leave. Not even though the project was still voluntary, as it did not have any legal bindings or official contracts. It had become an issue of trust.

On the other hand, for the participants, the social networks turned out to be too dear. They felt they were in it together or were curious to see what will the final outcome would be like and how the team will cope. So they could not leave either.

## **Trust and approval are vital**

To summarize: build the trust, but make it fun and significant enough for the participants. Also, remember that people stick to things they feel passionate about. Since you should not require too much from volunteers, slice the tasks into small bites to have easier goals which do not consume too much time. These were the lessons the Star Wreck team learned. Important lessons to anyone who wants to design a site with social media

features that should base itself on participatory economy.

We thought we had found more similarities with the open source communities, but noticed during the research that all the social media cases studied here had someone taking the leadership status and the openness was more or less restricted.

In Star Wreck, Samuli Torssonen and his core team wanted to cultivate enough resources so they supported discussions and threw in open requests for help. *The access was open*, but not the whole development.

In social media, designers consider trust issues in the interface design. The participation activity is made visible to others with personal profiles showing when we joined the site, when was the last sign-up, which are our past discussions. The systems count our visits and other actions, list last viewed videos, the freshest posts, the people we know, the profiles of other people we have opened.

Trustworthiness can also be attached to the digital identity with links that connect the profile owner to the content let loose. It can be bookmarks in del.icio.us by user name, or wiki edits that show who did which edits and when. There might even be a space to tell why the edit was made.

Some of the techniques are automatic; some require that either the people themselves or the other participants provide essential information for updating the trustworthiness of the person, or content, for that matter. If the site has no moderators or final decision-makers whatsoever, the systems usually offer at least some sort of tools to evaluate the content in order to show the best or most popular pics.

The tools to do this can be based on active users, like stars or thumbs up and down or automatic processes that count visits, sent posts, downloads etc. to offer the background information without additional effort from the users themselves.

As much as we decide which action we take on the social media sites, the user interface is the frame to take the action. It offers us the cues we

use to interpret the messages, even the individual's personalities. This limits our actions and directs the outcomess, like our case studies have shown.

There are 70 million blogs. Yet, we know only few of their authors are opinion leaders or major stakeholders that make a difference. Surely, not all of the blogs are alive or public, nor do all of the bloggers even aim at being widely known, but nevertheless the A-lists of bloggers are quite scarce.

No one knows how many social media sites already exist, but the amount must be huge. The directory [GO2Web20.net](http://GO2Web20.net) alone included 2,164 logs in March, 2008. Yet only few of the social media sites get referred, which helps to lure the flock of people to move on to that specific site rather than to an unknown one.

Jaiku's co-founder Jyri Engeström has summarized reference as one of the major success factors for social media entrepreneurs:

*– It is essential for the success to be the one to be referred to.*

This is not just about media coverage. Especially in collaborative productions, the network of friends might be the key for success. At least in Star Wreck, over half of the participants already knew other members of the community before joining the virtual production. In addition, over 43% of the members had also heard about the project from their acquaintances. So, the success of social media is based very much on viral communication that our social networks in general carry.

# 12.

## Discussion

To summarize, the developments changing the online media include the rise of user-driven content, fragmentation of media, and the technological changes, like feeds, aggregating, tagging, mash-ups and open interfaces and the cultural change of bringing things out into the public, which all are rather typical characteristics of social media.

Whereas many of the traditional media like newspapers, magazines, television, and radio live in a walled garden to foster content made by professionals and consumed by the audience, social media offers spaces for the flocks to nest. In these virtual spaces, users transform into creators, producers; into a collective force.

When most participation is voluntary and without monetary incentives, firms cannot make others do more than they already want to because of them or because of the social network they belong to. Instead, the firms can try to help the system work according to their own strategy with the help of a user interface that helps participants to create their personal image, corresponding with the ideal of that specific individual.

For example, Berking (1999, 27) writes about *the recipient's transformation – through gratitude obligations – into a representational value for others* and how the donor, the person giving something away, always notices *the symbolic surplus on his investment*.

Even if the co-fellow was rude and did not seem to appreciate the given gift, the donor still gets the satisfaction since he or she has implemented something ideal, at least from the person's subjective viewpoint if not in general.

When social media sites maintain open and participatory knowledge creation and content production, the systems seem to rely on the people's will to give or to aim at the successful exchange of whatever is at hand.

The successful sites have both the content and the people, but when the culture of the community perhaps does not suit the visitor or the available networks seem to be too remote, the site will lose the user.

People participate when they perceive that the participation has some value for them. They might just use some site without any reciprocal demands by others or themselves, without the idea of giving gifts. The term 'lurkers', though, makes one wonder whether, at least in some situations, people await some sort of effort from others in return.

## **Semi-open social media**

What happens if one scratches the surface? Though social media is participatory, it does not mean a loss of authorship or equality for all. Though tools offer ways to create knowledge and content more openly, we are not *that* open. Language barriers, digital divide, media literacy, insufficient personal competencies, subjective truths, personal agendas. That is the ballast people carry because, well, because we are humans.

The present discussions of new Internet technologies are somewhat reminiscent of talks about the American dream where anyone capable of it has the chance to succeed. In few cases it does happen, mostly it does not. That has not changed. For example, out of bloggers only those who are witty, write well or at least have time to send postings regularly, receive an audience.



The viral marketing and flock distribution rely on those web sites which have a large audience and on nodes that are linked and carry social capital, like active networks which could transmit the message even further.

When the Finnish Broadcasting Company Yleisradio moved the most watched video of the day from YouTube into its own video archive due to copyright infringement, the removal was against the basic idea of social media that content is streams, not just archived files in one place. The old fashioned way is to expect that everyone comes to your site to enjoy the content, instead of letting the content flow from site to site.

Now the lesson is learned at least if you listen to director general Mikael Jungner who is willing to give YLE's programs to all players for free with only one condition: the programs should not be broken with advertisements. However, it is okay if the advertisements are performed before or after the program. (Luukka 2008) Jungner's ideas have aroused rather bitter comments from the YLE's journalists side who worry about loosing the control of the copyrights if the content is used and reused all over the media field.

The open share policy is maybe even more problematic for the commercial media, music and movie industry than the public broadcasting companies. The commercial media has huge amounts of content to offer, but so far they lack flexible enough agreements with the authors.



**IMAGE 9.** Printscreens from the website of IAmBigBrother. The product is an example of monitoring others online.

Copyrights are the major obstacle for free and open content utilization, but some still want to get their share of the work that is re-sold. The gap is big. Hollywood writers had a strike in 2008, whereas others like [SimplyScripts](#) push free content onto the market.

The question remains how to measure the worth of something. There is the continuous debate about rights and who will pay for those rights. However, the participatory economy's results are not solely financial.

People want to participate in social media sites just for fun and in order to gain some personal pleasure. They are pleased to be able to help others, to overcome small and bigger challenges. The action does not need to provide money. This brings us to the issue of *free*. The consequences of free may be far more impressive than the advantages gained from the work that results in numbers on one's bank account.

## The private public life

One of the biggest issues during the coming decade will be privacy. Facebook already had to give in to the users' right to delete their account and all related content if one does not want to be a member of the site anymore.

Monopolies are one thing to get worried about. For example, Google takes care of all possible data: your e-mails in Gmail, events in Google Calendars, search history from Google, blog content with the help of Google Ads. The newest extension is Google Health.

How much more can a person give to a private, yet global company, and what might be the worst-case scenario if the data gets lost, misinterpreted or misused?

According to research by ComScore conducted for the New York Times, the big web companies are really collecting huge amounts of data about our consumer behavior. ComScore analysed 15 major media companies'

potential to collect online data in December 2007.

*The information transmitted might include the person's ZIP code, a search for anything from vacation information to celebrity gossip, or a purchase of prescription drugs or other intimate items. Some types of data, like search queries, tends to be more valuable than others. (Story 2008)*

*Yahoo came out with the most data collection points in a month on its own sites – about 110 billion collections, or 811 for the average user. In addition Yahoo has about 1,700 other opportunities to collect data about the average person on partner sites like eBay, where Yahoo sells the ads. MySpace, which is owned by the news corporation and AOL, a unit of Time Warner, were not far behind. (Story 2008)*

Another issue is the lateral surveillance based on peer-to-peer monitoring. The topic has been left to surprisingly little attention.

Peers themselves maintain search-engine surveillance, they save e-mails, share digital images and videos documenting events, blog about other people etc. The keystroke monitoring software and surveillance cameras are the edge, yet we also follow status updates and personal news feeds in Facebook or the moods in Skype.

We are able to check from Dopplr where the people are, from Jaiku and Twitter what they are doing at the moment, from LinkedIn which kind of professional history the person has and on Geni who are in their family tree. Then, a fast peek on del.icio.us shows the links your fellow searched for lately.

Next to some social network site where their friends are listed and perhaps to some add-on application that reveals the movie and book taste, what kind of personality the individual has and what others think about him or her – or about you. Some of the opinions are also visible on the public comments on blogs and in the profile pages discussion chan-

nels if not left private.

The age of social media is a wet dream for stalkers. Suddenly, there is no need to keep someone tracking what we do and who we are, since we do it ourselves while documenting our own lives and lives next door.

As Andrejevic (2006) puts it, we adopt “*Do-it-yourself monitoring*” since we want to reduce the potential risks that could harm our family or our lives in general.

*Management of family, optimization of personal relationships, and maximization of one’s own productivity are modeled on the enterprise model: maximized outcomes, enhance productivity, reduce risk. The market is promulgated as the anti-institutional institution, a big Other that relies neither on faith or tradition, but solely on the intersection and exchange of self-interest. (Andrejevic 2006, 494)*

Linkability is of course not an entirely bad thing. The more links point to the site, the better possibilities one has to succeed, since otherwise no one will find you. Like Bowman and Willis (2003, 56) stated already years ago:

*– By increasing the number of connections – through weblogs, forums, XML syndication and collaborative publishing engines – the strength of a media company’s node is enhanced.*

The snowball effect is something almost all social media sites rely on in their marketing. You do not find massive advertising from social media companies in traditional media, because almost all marketing messages go through free public promotions by media. There are even agents and firms specialized in social media dissemination, like marketwire, PR Newswire, Business Wire and PR Web that help to make *social media releases* (SMR). SHIFT Communications even offers [a template](#) for free to

marketing people for a check-up.

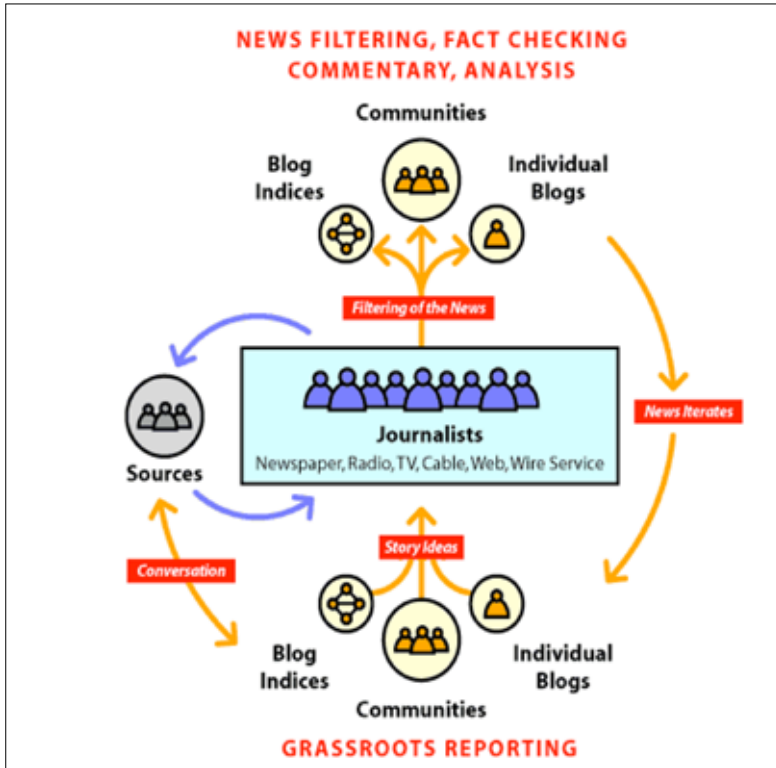
The most common way to spread the word is, however, viral marketing. When bloggers blog about your site, people Digg it, perhaps even write something about you on Wikipedia or save the link to del.icio.us, you know the ball has started to spin around.

The social media sites that work independently with autonomous participants struggle to maintain the motivation of members so that they would keep up the use-value of the site. If the site then tries at some point in its life to turn into a business, the owner of the site still has to struggle with the challenge of building the commitment, trust and motivation of the participants, but in addition, as the status of the site changes, a new obstacle gets in the way.

There is still not much, if any research on what happens in the process of commercialization. The interesting question is whether something unique vanishes during the commercialization: the original idea of the community, the spirit, the social cohesion. Those are the core ingredients for a successful social media site that thrives in the participatory economy.

### **The new media ecosystem?**

In their illuminating figure, Bowman and Willis (2003) have shown how the grassroots reporting done by bloggers and some other independent actors outside the traditional media feed story ideas into the professional journalistic machine. On the other hand, the grassroots level also filters, comments on and analyses the journalistic content.



**FIGURE 10.** The emerging Media Ecosystem by Bowman and Willis (2003).

The illustration is of course idealistic. It is hard to say how well this type of grassroots media critique is working, for example, in Finland in general, but at least in some cases the blogging community has been able to correct some of the mistakes that the mainstream media has made.

So far, the evolution has been transforming the Finnish media environment quite slowly. Why this is the case is a matter of thorough comparative analysis between the media spheres and media systems in various countries.

In principle, the new ways to collaborate with the former audience

could give a positive turn to the development of journalism. But there is a danger that journalism is forgotten in this transformation process.

As professor Mark Deuze stated in a research interview for the Parteco project in September 2007:

*What is changing, however, is that the focus in the industry has shifted away from journalism towards media. So all the debates about innovation, renewal, change, threats, challenges, opportunities are media debates. Finding new platforms of dissemination, starting new websites or starting that and using this or that protocol and using that technology or whatever. But there is hardly any discussion about Ok, how can we make better journalism*

*And that is kind of sad because that media system will evolve completely outside of the control of journalism. If journalism will focus on media it will basically dig its own grave because the media system is going way too fast for journalism to catch up.*

The ecosystem is also different in technological terms. When earlier everything was supposed to be managed on one's own web site, the social media has cracked this down. In the open media model, content is a stream that flows from place to place and that can be stitched to multiple places with major or minor changes by the people who have something to say on the issue.

The media houses seem to have forgotten that content flows both ways: in and out the office. Where are the innovative cases where journalists are not scared the new mode, but what they have always done best: select and present the user-value adding story out of the chunks of information that roll around?

Short quotes from blogs will not get you far. Not in a business sense, nor when used as a watch dog.

The question is not only how much one is ready to risk when letting the content loose, but how *smart* the team is to construct effective end-results from the available external sources to keep the audience, and themselves, awake.

There are plenty of tools and different methods to make one's own social media mix that suits the strategy and vision of the media house, as we have shown with the examples and the preliminary description of the social media and participatory economy.

The future of journalism lies in the question of whether the core values of this institution can be brought into the era of social media; whether the industry is ready and able to adopt the tools that not just encourage, but are based on the culture of participation.

So, what is the best winning mix of means? That will be a major issue for further studies and research projects, and most importantly, a topic the management of both the traditional and social media should solve to stay in business.



# 13.

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