Digital communities & reducing waste in graduate education

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Open source movement

- A new administrative form
- Competitive products
- >70,000 projects
- Does not fit accepted economic behavior
Community

A community is an organizational form for economic value creation that is characterized by voluntary membership, high autonomy, and whose members receive little or no extrinsic rewards.
Community

- Communities appeal to some nations
- Communities might be superior for creativity
- Communities might be more responsive
Transaction cost

- A cost incurred in making an economic exchange
- Motivation and coordination costs
Key factors

- Incentives motivate agents to be effective producers
- Control is to the capacity of a governance structure to contain opportunistic behaviors and to align the behavior of agents implicated in a transaction
Governance structures

Intensity of incentives

- High
- Low

Intensity of control

- High
- Low

Firm

Network

Community

Market
Communities

- Oxford English Dictionary
  - > 10,000 contributors
  - > 6 million contributions
- Penny post
1859 call to American scholars

In November 1857, a paper was read before the Philological Society by Archbishop Trench, then Dean of Westminster, on ‘Some Deficiencies in our English Dictionaries,’ which led to a resolution on the part of the Society to prepare a Supplement to the existing Dictionaries supplying these deficiencies. A very little work on this basis sufficed to show that to do anything effectual, not a mere Dictionary-Supplement, but a new Dictionary worthy of the English Language and of the present state of Philological Science, was the object to be aimed at. Accordingly, in January 1859, the Society issued their ‘Proposal for the publication of a New English Dictionary,’ in which the characteristics of the proposed work were explained, and an appeal made to the English and American public to assist in collecting the raw materials for the work, these materials consisting
Communities

- Academic journals
  - Editors and reviewers are academics
  - No payment
  - Disseminate knowledge and skills
Communities

- Wikipedia
  - Free online encyclopedia
  - 180,000 articles in the English edition
  - > 20 languages
  - Authorship not directly recognized
Communities

- Open source
  - > 70,000 projects
  - Viable products
Transaction benefits

- A benefit incurred in making an economic exchange
- Above and beyond direct financial returns
Transaction benefits

Transaction costs

Transaction characteristics

Individual characteristics & needs

Information systems

Information technology

Governance structure

National culture & policy
IS versus IT

- An information technology transmits, processes, or stores information.
- An information system is an integrated and cooperating set of software directed information technologies supporting organizational goals.
Typology of communities

Transaction benefits

- High
- Low

Responsiveness

- Low
- High

- Diffusive
- Inventive
- Restrictive
- Adaptive

High
Low
Governance includes the rules that describe the community and its written and unwritten laws governing the community internally and externally.
Leadership is the inspiring and influencing act performed to motivate and align people towards a common goal.
GL&M in digital communities

Management is the planning, organizing, and controlling of the work of individuals and groups within the community.
Research method

- Focus on digital communities
  - Adaptive
  - Inventive
- Field interviews
- Quantitative analysis
- Action research
Adaptive project

- XML text (http://wikibooks.org/wiki/XML)
- MIST7700 class
- Fudan University
Inventive project (OTC)

- TourDM
- TourML
- TourStyle
- TourCMS
- TourImplement
- TourCommunity
Reducing waste

- Graduate students’ work should not be thrown away
- We can create an accumulative infrastructure for wealth creation
- We can influence transaction benefits
Research issues

- Leadership style
- Governance mechanisms
- Management practices
- Community success
Educational issues

This semester’s paper
Practitioner issues

What knowledge is transferable to other governance structures?
Open source is a challenge to existing practice and theory.

Digital communities are a new form of wealth creation.

Graduate students can participate in digital communities as part of their assessable work.