I-INTENTION AND WE-INTENTION TO CONTRIBUTE TO WIKIPROJECTS

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DECEMBER 2009
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I-intention and We-intention to Contribute to WikiProjects
維基任務中知識貢獻的個人意愿和集體意愿

Submitted to
Department of Information Systems
資訊系統學系
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
哲學博士學位

by

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December 2009
二零零九年十二月
ABSTRACT

The fast advances in social computing technologies have greatly changed the ways in which people work and collaborate. One prominent example of this ongoing trend is the rapid growth of wiki-based communities in the past few years. The development and popularity of online encyclopedia greatly relies on the wisdom of crowds, allowing the content to be contributed and accessed by anyone at any time around the world. However, the success of wiki, on the other hand, largely depends on the extent to which people are willing to donate their time and energy, thus helping the community to grow and prosper. In this sense, how to recruit a core group of contributors to produce excellent articles systematically and how to encourage team collaboration for encyclopedic work thus are some fundamental questions for wiki managers.

One of the distinguishing features of wiki community is its emphasis on the collective involvement in the creation and maintenance of frequently updated information. The traditional intention-based models primarily investigated this phenomenon using individual intention approach in terms of an individual’s own decision to contribute or not. However, in the context of WikiProjects, the interdependence involved in the joint decision-making process seems to be more important for explaining the decision to contribute. The motivation of this study thus is to better understand the causal factors that predict contributors’ I-intention and we-intention in WikiProjects. This study also investigates the possible different impacts of I-intention and we-intention on actual knowledge contribution behavior in WikiProjects.

The research framework incorporates the key constructs from social cognitive theory and
social capital theory. In addition, it also draws from the existing philosophical writing on collective intentionality to better explain contributors’ we-intention in WikiProjects. The empirical research was conducted in two most largest and famous wiki communities in Mainland China. An invitation message with a URL to the online questionnaire was sent to the contributors who had participated in encyclopedic writing in WikiProjects. A follow-up message was sent four weeks later to assess their actual contribution behaviors. Finally, a total of 246 usable responses were received and the survey data was analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Graph Version 3.00. The measurement model was first assessed and then the structural model was evaluated.

The empirical results of this study support most of the hypotheses proposed in the research model. In particular, we-intention contributes significantly to actual contribution behavior, whereas I-intention exerts a significant negative effect on behavior. Joint commitment and mutual agreement significantly relate to we-intention to contribute but do not exert any statistically significant effects on individual intention. Generalized trust, pro-sharing norms and identification play important roles in the formation of both joint commitment and mutual agreement. In addition, personal outcome expectations and community-related outcome expectations posit significant direct effects on both I-intention and we-intention to contribute to WikiProjects.

This study seeks to provide valuable and important insights to both researchers and practitioners. On the theoretical side, this study contributes significantly to IS research by discussing the importance and relevance of we-intention in intentional social action, identifying and empirically testing the potential antecedents of we-intention, developing and validating some new IS instruments, and advancing the cumulative knowledge of
multidisciplinary research on knowledge contribution. On the practical side, the results of this study also provide some important insights and practical strategies to wiki managers by discussing the best methods to recruit a core group of dedicated contributors and to encourage team collaboration for encyclopedic work.
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