UDC 004.758.52

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TYPICAL WAYS OF WEB COMMUNITIES DEVELOPMENT

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This article considers important problems of typical ways of web communities development analyzing. Also main types of web community participants are given, their behavior models are analyzed, ways of web communities development and evolution are investigated.

Keywords – communities, web community, web communication, web community, forum, communities, moderation, community evolution.

1. Introduction

People communication in the Web became very ordinary thing for today. Permanently new and new means of communication are invented, but such traditional mean as web communities (forum), are still very popular. Besides that fact that great amount of web communities, dedicated to different subjects, already exist, new one's appears every day. That's why ways of web communities development prediction is very important task that is very interesting for web community creators. Solving this task helps to achieve the necessary aim, because it is very complicated to change users behavior after web community is formed.

2. Main part

Web community participants features

– Activity – feature that is defined by participant messages quantity and number of new threads, that he proposes to discuss. Participants that have such feature very often are new thread authors, take part in many discussions.

– Creativity – feature that is defined by participant messages quality (size and usefulness of reply). Participants that have such feature very often are thread authors that start with large, interesting and attractive post.

– Reactivity – feature that is defined by participant speed of response (answer/reply writing time) on the topic that is discussed currently.

– Loyalty - feature that is defined by participant relation to the community, his interest in community's long, successful and interesting life.

Typical ways of web communities development

Before start of web community creating, project authors have to define the wished way of web community developing and evolution. It means that they have to work out such administrative politics and popularization plan, that will help to achieve the goals.

As a result of analysis, that was made, such typical web community development scenarios were found:

– Hyperactive. Aim of hyperactive web community creating is to gain great popularity of web community by inviting as much active participants as possible. In such case main features of web communities are: simple registration form (or it's absence at all), very liberal web community administration politics that allow participant to do what they want; absence of censoring and so on. Disadvantage of this scenario are: slow but permanent growing of "informational garbage" (the same themes are discussed many times in different threads); problems with finding - it is very complicated to find all useful posts related to this theme, because of large amount of them; impossibility of discussing "hot" themes correctly; mutual offend of participants and others.

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– Web community for pleasant communication. Such web community development scenario is chosen, when the author of project wants to create stable, intelligent, intellectual community, without active and destructive participants. Priority aims for such community is stableness and discussions quality instead of popularity. Characteristic features of such web communities are: pre-moderated registration process that allows to keep unwanted participants out of community; strong web community administration politics (administration watch's participants to observe the rules, ban's participants that break's the rules).

– Knowledge base. Such web community development scenario is chosen, when the aim of project is to accumulate quality information in some sphere of knowledge. Accumulation of such information is a result of inviting professional experts in this sphere of knowledge to web community. This experts fill this knowledge base with their knowledge (usually large fundamental posts). Quality and usefulness of posts are more important than their quantity or threads update frequency. Such web communities experts are invited by projects authors. Other participants mostly take the role of auditory, they read materials and gives question sometimes.

Formal and real types of web community participants

From the community point of view we can classify community participants by the formal and informal features:

By the formal features web community participants belong to one of the class:

– Unregistered (guests) – only can read other community participants messages in the threads (sometimes not completely).

– Registered participants – can read messages in the threads, take part in discussions and polls, create in discussions and polls.

– Moderators – besides possibilities of registered participants, moderators have some duties such as deleting incorrect and meaningless messages, deleting messages that are off topic, correcting messages, web community popularization, new participants inviting.

– Administrators – have the highest status in web community hierarchy, besides moderator's functions have additional functions such as "teacher" (participants registration, answering the questions), "supervisor" (banning participants that are breaking the rules). They also provide technical support, community popularization, new participants inviting.

By the informal features web community participants belong to one of the class:

– Activist – participant, which features are: high activity and high creativity. Takes part in many discussions, gives new themes to discuss, visits web community very often.

– Moderator - participant, which features are: high activity and high loyalty. Takes part in many discussions, shows loyalty to the community, takes part in its development.

– Author - participant, which features are: high creativity and low activity. Such participant creates actual, professional, quality posts, but does it very rarely, doesn't take part in discussions.

– Critic - participant, which main feature is low creativity. Such participant has pessimistic nature, always criticizes other participants opinions, takes part in all disputes. Such participant is useful for community while he keeps the community rules, he stimulates discussions evolution. If Critic violate web community rules, his activity and presence became destructive for community. That's why it is necessary to predict such situations and constrain his participation in discussions, if there is a need – ban him.

– Flamer – participant, which main feature is absence of creativity, Flamers posts, as usual, have no sense. His activity is very negative for web community, that's why such participant types we can see only in Hyperactive web communities.

– Reader – participant, that mainly read discussions and very rarely posts something. He is interested in reading news and interesting discussions in web community knowledge sphere, other participants points of view.

Messages types

From the formal point of view every post in threads can belong to the one of following types:

– Theme start – first post in thread. While thread name creating it is necessary to make it correctly. Name of the thread must show thread theme. There is no sense to give a thread such names as "Help". It is better to name it "Help me to make correct Windows XP settings"

– Poll start – poll question, with poll name and answers that can be chosen. It is important to form full domain of answers (that means that no one answer besides proposed on this question exist).

- Reply – every post in the thread, that is not a theme start, is reply. Reply can include citation of previous replies (posts) of different participants.
- Each theme (thread) could be classified by such characteristics:
- Significance. Significance is defined by quality, style of given material and discussion development in this thread. Significant post in thread has great number of reviews, citations, hyperlinks from other sites.
- Attractiveness. Attractiveness is defined by thread popularity among the web community participants (quantity of participants that take part in discussion), great number of posts per time unit.
- Amount. Amount is defined by number of posts in thread. Large amount of theme doesn't means that theme is useful. Sometimes such theme are created to congratulate each other in community or for chat.
- Vitality (long discussion). Vitality of thread is defined by space of time while new posts appears. As usual such themes are dedicated to some everlasting things, not events. (e.g. Education)

Important thread features

We can mark out such themes features that are most important for community:

- Popularity (total quantity of registered web community participants, that took part in discussions);
- Attendance (total quantity of people (registered/unregistered) that have visited web community);
- Citing (inside and outside hyperlinks on the threads)
- Civility of discussions (absence of variances and offences)

In different web community development scenarios some features are more or less important.

For example, for "Hyperactive" way of development more important are *Popularity* and *Attendance*, for "Web community for pleasant communication" scenario more important is *Civility of discussions*, for "Knowledge base" scenario more important is *Civility of discussions*.

3. Conclusion

It is very important and primary task for web community authors to choose the community development and evolution scenario. That's why before inviting participants to community there is need to define web community development strategy; aim that authors want to reach.

Establishing web community rules and administration policy are also primary tasks for community creators. It will help to avoid community crisis in the future and will lead to systematic, planned, balanced community development and evolution.

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