DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

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Monday, February 21, 2011 2:00 pm

Posner 388

"Essays on socialization in online groups"

One of the challenges of online groups is helping new group members adjust to their environment. This adjustment process has been referred to as socialization, or the process of learning the behaviors and attitudes essential to playing a role in a group. During the adjustment process, new members moved from peripheral to full participation, their goals, tools, and perceptions of the community changed. However, there has been little empirical research on how socialization is accomplished in online groups and or on its effectiveness. This dissertation examines the impact various socialization practices on socialization outcome.

The first chapter relates to the investigation phase of group socialization where groups attempt to recruit appropriate people and where individuals assess groups. Groups and individuals employ a variety of methods for recruiting and selecting new members to achieve matching between them. We suggest and test how modality of these recruitment and assessment techniques affects both assessment quality and turnover from the newcomer and group's point of view.

The second chapter study examines the impact of various socialization practices on socialization outcome once newcomers join the group. After newcomers joining the group, groups try to shape the individuals to make them contribute more to the accomplishment of group goals and individuals attempt to learn about the group and assimilate themselves into it. We investigate what types of socialization tactics are used in online groups and which tactic is effective to increases newcomers' commitment to online groups.

The third chapter aims to identify the impact of different types of old-timers and newcomers on quantity and quality of information they send or receive and their outcomes in online groups. Different types of already existing old-timers are believed to help facilitate newcomer adjustment by helping them make sense of and develop an identity in their new environment. Newcomers' information seeking behaviors play in facilitating their own adjustment. The goal of this study is to identify what types of old-timers provide newcomers more and better help and what types of newcomers are socialized better and commit to the group more.