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Research 2.0: encouraging engagement in online market research communities

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Abstract

Research 2.0 is the emerging term used to describe the use of Web 2.0 platforms to conduct research with geographically dispersed participants. Research 2.0 is becoming particularly popular within the market research industry. We argue that Research 2.0 communities are fundamentally different to the traditional online research communities (ORCs) as they have a specific aim of satisfying research objectives that can inhibit rather than enable community development. This paper reports on two key issues: potential ways to improve the engagement in and e-moderation of online research communities (ORCs), which are using Web 2.0 tools. The study adopts an interpretivist stance and uses data triangulation - online community members' survey, three months of observations and three focus groups with moderators in the market research company. The findings suggest a typology of motivational factors that drive the ORC members, to improve their engagement and it is suggested that specific member types such "Social Engagement Seekers" and "Hobbyists" should be encouraged and nurtured. Additionally we find that there is a need to reconsider the moderator role within Research 2.0 environments.

Keywords: Research 2.0, Online Research Communities, Online Communities

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Abstract

Research 2.0 is the emerging term used to describe the use of Web 2.0 platforms to conduct research with geographically dispersed participants. Research 2.0 is becoming particularly popular within the market research industry. We argue that Research 2.0 communities are fundamentally different to the traditional online research communities (ORCs) as they have a specific aim of satisfying research objectives that can inhibit rather than enable community development. This paper reports on two key issues: potential ways to improve the engagement in and e-moderation of online research communities (ORCs), which are using Web 2.0 tools. The study adopts an interpretivist stance and uses data triangulation - online community members' survey, three months of observations and three focus groups with moderators in the market research company. The findings suggest a typology of motivational factors that drive the ORC members, to improve their engagement and it is suggested that specific member types such "Social Engagement Seekers" and "Hobbyists" should be encouraged and nurtured. Additionally we find that there is a need to reconsider the moderator role within Research 2.0 environments.

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1 INTRODUCTON

With the introduction of Web2.0 new opportunities are arising for the Information Systems community to make a contribution to the design, development and diffusion of these emerging Information Systems technologies into new application areas. As an indicative example, the market research industry has embraced Web 2.0 tools to support their data collection activities, indeed the industry has recently started using the phrase 'Research 2.0' to cover a range of research methods utilising Web 2.0 tools and environments (Oxley, 2006). Research 2.0 is not to be confused with a similar term that has recently been coined – Science 2.0 which is the notion of open science whereby scientists publish their emerging experiment results in open, collaborative forums (Waldrop, 2008). To reflect the market research profession's interest in the area the Market Research Society conference held in December 2007 was dedicated to Research 2.0. Three particular drivers for the adoption of Research 2.0 technologies by the market research industry were noted, the declining response rates to both online and offline surveys and polls, the general public's increased use of online reviews of products, companies and services that they interact with and the potential cost savings (estimated to be circa 40%) that online research offers when compared to traditional survey research (Stafford and Gonier, 2007). Indeed, it has been suggested that the market research environment is changing with users not only supplying answers but also increasingly posing the questions and taking a more proactive role in shaping the areas of research (Comley, 2008). Hence, the interactivity that is offered by Web 2.0 tools such as discussion boards, wikis and blogs (O'Reilly, 2005) can be utilised in Research 2.0 environments to provide market researchers with an opportunity to gain richer insight and a tighter relationship with their interviewees and hence provide their clients with potentially richer data (Austin et al., 2007).

Market research companies have used online polls for several years to collect quantitative data but the development of bespoke online panels using community tools such as discussion forums, bloggs or

social networks to collect qualitative data are a more recent but rapidly expanding phenomena with in excess of 1000 bespoke research panels recently being run online (Harmon, 2005). The lead companies in this area are internationals such as the GfK Group and Communispace in the US and Virtual Surveys in the UK (Comley, 2008). Online research communities (ORCs) are typically closed communities where interaction is based on an agenda prompted by the researcher or moderator. These bespoke communities may vary in size but response rates are usually higher that the open 'naturally occurring' online communities (NOOCs). Due to the emerging nature of this type of research inevitably there are issues such as the validity of findings (Stafford and Gonier, 2007) and the consequential maintenance of such communities (Comley, 2008).

This paper reports on an interpretive investigation in collaboration with Virtual Survey Limited (VSL) on the use of Research 2.0 techniques in two online research communities they run on behalf of easyJet plc and United Biscuits (UK) Ltd. Due to the emerging nature of ORCs there is a need for academic studies to explore our understanding of the phenomena. Specifically, this paper aims to explore the processes that could increase long-term community member engagement and the moderation process within ORCs. To accomplish this aim we draw on online communities engagement literature and e-moderation models. Afterwards, we briefly outline the details of the study and data based on observation, an online survey of community members and focus group sessions with e-moderators. The observations are discussed in relation to the 5 Stage Model for e-moderation (Salmon, 2004) and other studies in the field of NOOCs.

2 ONLINE COMMUNITIES

2.1 Naturally Occurring Online Communities (NOOCs)

When developing NOOCs there are a number of key issues to be considered. According to Wenger, a community consists of three basic elements: firstly the notion of joint enterprise, that the participants shared identification and common goals; secondly that the participants mutually engage, that they learn and undertaken activities together; and thirdly that the participants have a shared repertoire, a set of communal resources that have developed as part of their engagement (Wenger, 1998). Moving to consider online communities a number of authors have provided insight into the success or otherwise of online communities.

For example, according to Dwyer et al (2004) there are two distinct categories of online behaviour, firstly information seeking as illustrated by passive access and viewing and secondly social engagement as illustrated by participants who undertake active contribution (Dwyer, Zhang, and Hiltz, 2004). The information seeker type implies that the members are interested in updating their own knowledge in relation to a specific area of interest. Hence membership is sustained by the quality of information provided and how it is organised and presented and the speed with which it is updated. The desire for social engagement suggests intrinsic motivational factors such as feeling of belonging, altruism and the desire to provide meaningful contribution (Arguello et al., 2006; Ludford, Cosley, Frankowski, and Terveen, 2004; McLure and Faraj, 2000). Indeed it has bee argued that supporting interpersonal relationships and encouraging social engagement can be argued to be the key objective in developing successful online communities (Arguello et al., 2006). More recently, in their study five Norwegian NOOCs Brandtzæg and Heim (2008) identified nine dominant factors that contributed to participants leaving or disengaging from NOOCs, the most significant factors, with over 50% of respondents identifying them as issues, being a lack of interesting people/friends attending and low quality content (Brandtzæg and Heim, 2008).

Furthermore, trust between community members has been established as a key enabler of online community contributions (Ardichvili, Page, and Wentling, 2003). For example, members may hesitate to contribute out of fear of criticism, they may also deliberately or subconsciously provide misleading contributions, they may doubt the importance of their contribution, provide inaccurate contributions or

doubt that their potential contributions could be relevant to a specific discussion. These issues suggest that development of trust between members is a challenging task and a number of trust models have been developed to support the creation of trust in NOOCs (c.f. Brandtzæg and Heim, 2008; Preece and Maloney-Krichmar, 2003; Zacharia and Maes, 2000).

These issues that appear to be dependent factors on the development of successful NOOCs suggests that the role of online community moderators may be critical (Ardichvili et al., 2003). However, counterargument questions the notion of the 'managed' community suggesting that formal moderation "may throttle" an otherwise thriving online community (Ardichvili et al., 2003; Stamps, 1997; Stewart, 1997; Ward, 2000; Weiss, 2001).

2.2 Online Research Communities (ORCs)

Whilst the above literature review gives a rich insight into the key research issues for NOOCs there are features of ORCs that differentiate them from the more traditional online communities. NOOCs tend to connect people with common interests, in ORCs the community is closed and members are selected based on specified profiles, whilst these profiles tend to be of people with a common interest (for example frequent flyers) there are also occasions when the research dictates that the participants should be from outside of the niche. NOOCs tend to attract people who are passionate about the subject; whilst this may be the case in ORCs the aim is to ensure that the participating body represents a broader view of users rather then only brand advocates. The nature of NOOCs means that the community is usually discovered via word of mouth or serendipity, in the case of ORCs, which are closed communities; recruitment to the community is targeted and strictly controlled. This means that NOOCs may have a much larger membership base than ORCs although engagement in ORCs tends to be much higher. Furthermore, in NOOCs the agenda is self-evident, the community usually has a 'cause', whereas in ORCs the agenda is clearly communicated at recruitment stage, the subject matter is usually dictated by the moderator which frequently means that there is no shared agenda beyond answering direct questions from the moderator and therefore there are limited opportunities for the users to coalesce. Therefore, whilst in NOOCs user interaction is usually peer-to-peer, in ORCs there is a tendency for participants to simply respond to the moderator with limited interaction between peers. This reliance on the moderator is also evident in the reluctance in ORCs, unlike NOOCs, for members to self-police; rather participants rely on the moderator to act as mediator and monitor. Furthermore, due to the 'managed' nature of ORCs where both moderators and clients are actively 'listening' and analysing responses, there is debate on whether some contributions are genuine or whether responses are tailored in an attempt to influence client decisions or attract extrinsic motivators (prizes, payments etc). For example, consider this observation from a Communispace participant:

"*It's like the whole package, yeah sure* ***the incentives are nice*** *but [it's] the surveys and bulletin boards, it's the heads up on future products and promotions, you kind of feel that you had a say … you're like yeah I did a survey about the effects of that ad."*

– Style Leader, Youth Community (Austin et al., 2007:10).

Although only an isolated quote it is interesting as there is clear reference to information seeking behaviour, additionally the motivation of 'influence' is clear however there is no reference to the notions of participation in 'community'.

2.3 Longitudinal Participation in Online Research Communities

As Research 2.0 evolves the recruitment, retention and engagement of suitable participants into ORCs will become critical. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to the identification of the factors that influence the longitudinal participation of individuals in ORCs. We have chosen to use Salmon's 5 Stage Model for e-moderation as mechanism for conceptualising the process of engagement in ORCs

as it allows us to consider both the participants and moderators roles (Salmon, 2004). Whilst this model was developed with learning communities in mind it has since been used in a number of other ways to structure online communication processes (Lynch, Heinze, and Scott, 2009) and offers practical advice on the use of online communication (Chowcat, 2005; Moule, 2007), [see Figure 1: 5 Stage Model, adapted after Salmon (2004: 29)].

This model of online community building and facilitation describes a five-stage process mapping the different stages of engaging participants using online communication technology. In the figure demonstrating the model, the level of engagement is indicated by the interactivity column (far right hand side) and the darkness of the colour. Engagement starts from stage 1 "Access and motivation" and progresses up to stage 5 "Development". Each of the stages is subdivided into two triangles representing the roles of the e-moderator and the technical support staff. These roles vary at each stage.

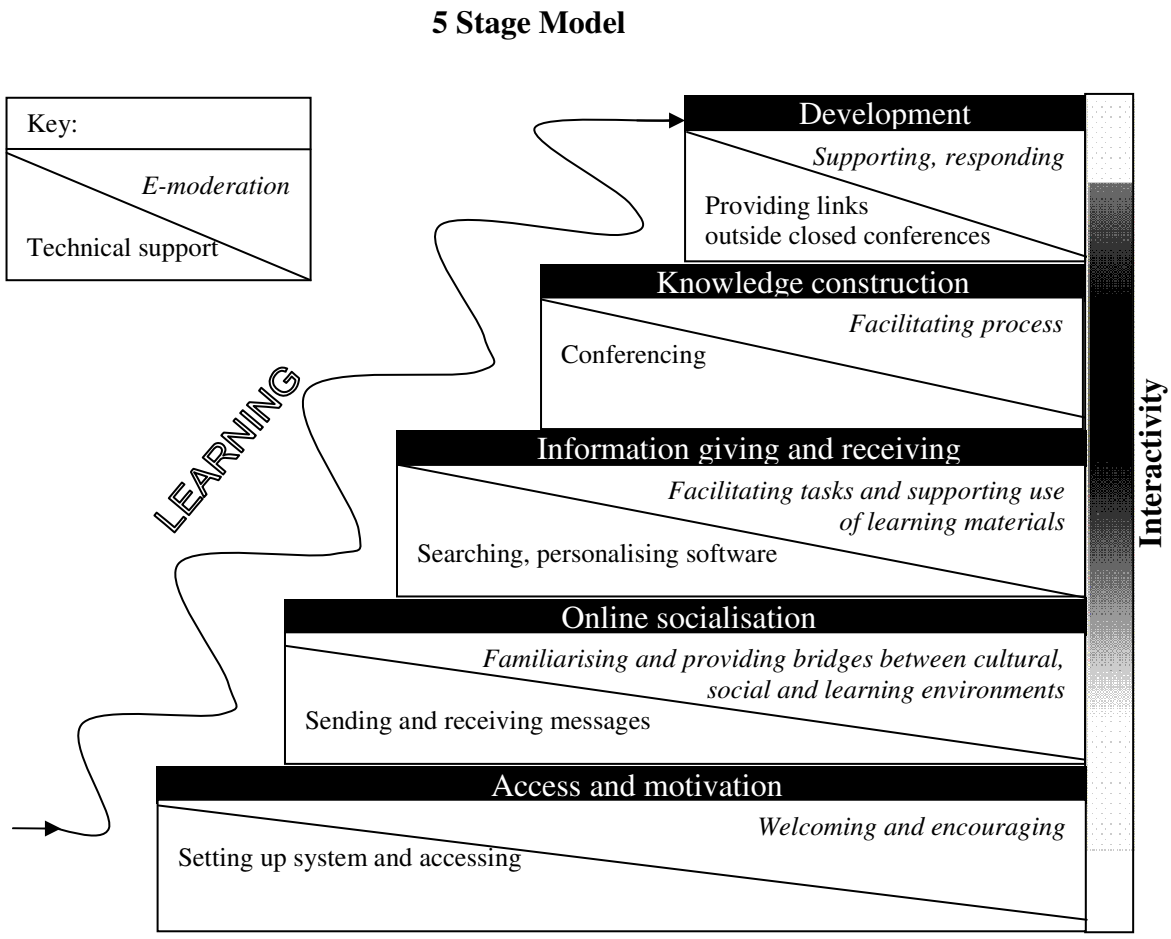

Figure 1: 5 Stage Model, adapted after Salmon (2004: 29)

The first stage of the 5 Stage Model is concerned with accessing the system, when participants are issued with access information by the technical support and welcomed by the e-moderator. The second stage focuses on online socialisation of the participants in the community; they are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the environment and socialise with others. The information exchange stage puts more emphasis on interaction and engages participants with the materials. The final two stages are where the participants should already be familiar with their environment and thus are able to proceed with knowledge construction and development.

The model is based on a sequential principle that there are certain steps that have to be mastered before higher-level steps can be undertaken. The underlying principle is to use activities to make participants interact with each other and the e-moderator, rather than simply engage in information seeking activity.

This research has chosen to extend Salmon's 5 Stage Model to include 'Selection Stage' and 'Disengagement Stage'. The 'Selection Stage' was used to probe if there are any particular variables that determined individuals' activities in the community. The 'Disengagement Stage' was included to determine any common variables that might have contributed to community members withdrawing.

3 INTERPRETIVE ACTION RESEARCH DESIGN

The research presented in this paper adopts an interpretive stance (Oates 2006). The research aims to explore the interaction and moderation processes in ORCs and to identify appropriate stimuli to increase long-term contributor engagement using Salmon's (2004) model as a theoretical foundation for the study. To achieve this aim the authors became members of the studied ORCs for three months, also 465 responses from an online survey were analysed and 3 in depth focus groups were undertaken with experienced VSL ORC moderators. The researchers involved in the study area are the authors and members of Virtual Surveys Ltd management team who include individuals with over 25 years experience of running market research studies in commercial settings. The studied ORCs are managed by Virtual Surveys Ltd on behalf of their clients: easyJet plc and United Biscuits UK Ltd (UB). Guided by Myers' (1997) assertion that interpretive research should present multiple viewpoints of those involved and their different perspectives the observations and interpretations made by the researchers were presented back to VSL management for potential improvements to be discussed and incorporated back into subsequent data collection scenarios.

3.1 The Communities

The easyJet ORC was established in April 2008 and consists of approximately[1] 1800 (c.600 female, c.1200 male) members and the United Biscuits community was established in July 2007 and consists of approximately 1000 (c.700 female, c.300 male) members. Each online research community employs a range of Research 2.0 functionalities including voting polls, discussion forums, virtual focus groups, blog environments and functionality to allow community members to upload personal details, photos, videos and create friendship networks (see Figure 2 for a screenshot taken from the eayJet ORC).

Each community has a dedicated moderator who posts email requests to members to contribute to the ORC on a specific topic of interest to the client on approximately a twice-weekly basis. The participants are not offered monetary reward for engaging with the online research communities however all respondents in the easyJet community are placed in a weekly free flights prize draw, 'quality' discussion forum contributions are also rewarded with free or discounted flights. The United Biscuits community are offered free snacks and biscuits. VSL typically release a market research survey and then supply responses to the client within a one-week period. Responses to query requests sent by email to the ORC typically start within minutes of posting a notification of a new query to participants, peak within 24 hours with no significant additional responses after a one-week period.

[1] Community membership numbers are rounded to the nearest 100.

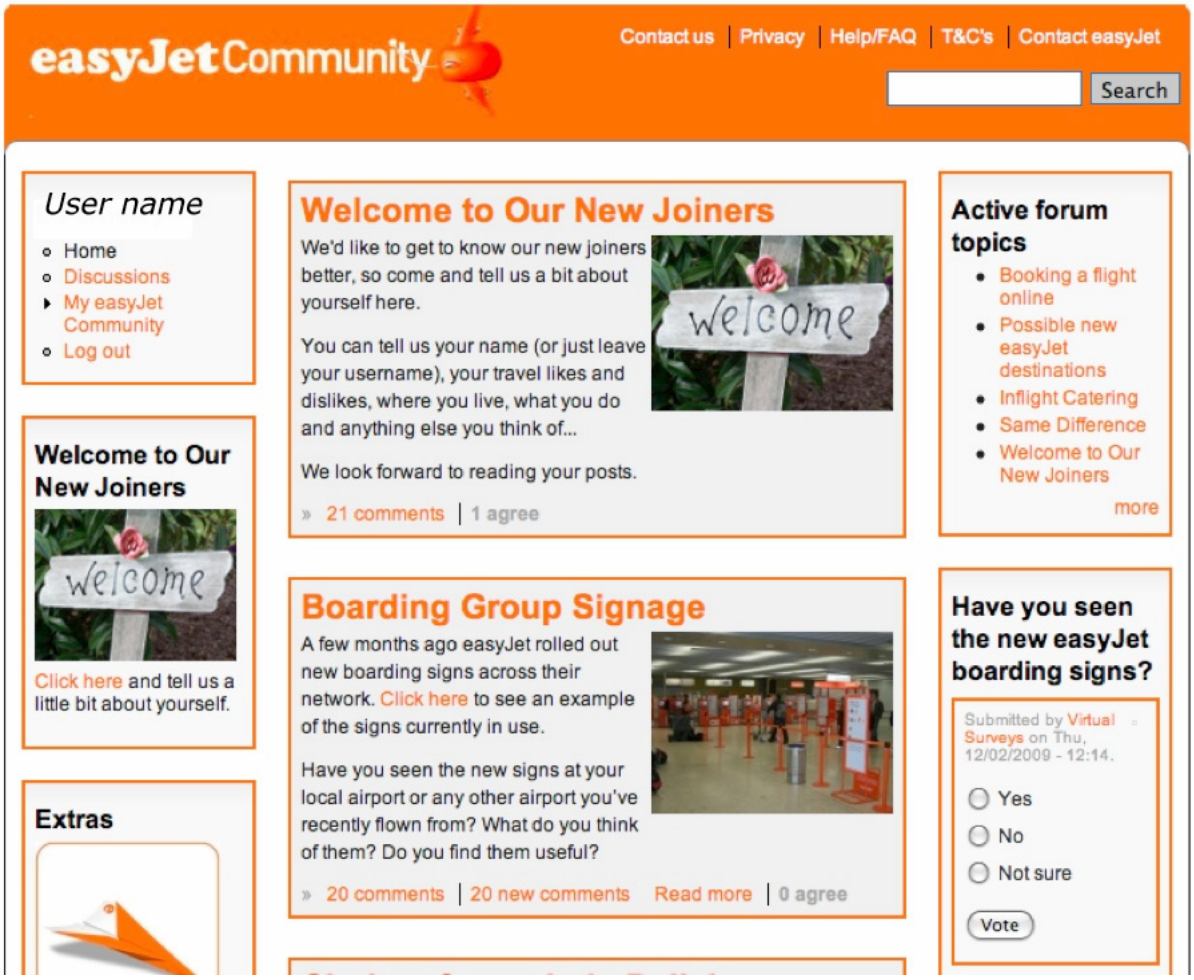

Figure 2: Screenshot of easyJet online research community

As is demonstrated by the speed of responses within these commercial ORCs the volume of data generated within a short period of time means that a longitudinal study was not a prerequisite for gaining a meaningful dataset. Response rates on given topics are on average 2% of the total community with approximately 10 to 45 responses per request. One of the issues of community management is that the majority of community memberships are inactive for example in the easyJet ORC over 1300 users have not posted a single contribution and in the United Biscuits ORC it is over 500 users. However, some participants are extremely active, for example the maximum number of posts by anyone member in the EasyJet ORC is 57 and in the United Biscuits ORC is 350. As a result of non-contribution the community membership is continuously refreshed, the non-active members are withdrawn and new members are recruited. This adds a dynamic nature to the communities as membership is refreshed approximately every six months. The Figure 2 illustrates an example of a welcome forum for new community members. The figure illustrates on the left hand side a general navigation menu, in the middle of the screen are two discussion prompts and on the right hand side are active forum topics and a poll.

4 DATA DISCUSSION

4.1 Contributor Motivation

In order to gain a preliminary understanding of the motivators for community members to take part in ORCs the research firstly undertook a detailed analysis of the responses provided by 112 members of the United Biscuits community (known as snackrs.com) in response to the question 'What are the best things about being a member of this community?' Because qualitative data analysis is an open and iterative process categorisation resulted in the emergence or induction of a rich categorisation as the categories were 'extended', 'filled in', 'bridged' and 'surfaced' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The initial analysis of the responses to the above question indicated that the rationale for participant interaction in ORCs could be subdivided into seven motivational factors, of concern is the limited number of quotes that appear to suggest that participants are seeking social engagement. Note that some participants provided several responses. This means that someone can be classified as, for example, both information seeker and social engagement seeker at the same time. The typology is provisional and the types will be further refined as the research progresses. A summary of the types analysis and their potential tendencies as identified in the literature is provided in table 1. It is important to note that these are ideal case scenarios and there may be situations that will not conform to these tendencies.

Nr	Type	Quote examples
1	Social engagement seekers	"Seeing other people options and being able to view your own" "getting involved in discussions - being able to see what other peoples' opinions are and giving my own" "feeling like we have some input" "Its great to share the experience with other snackrs"
2	Power seekers	"Being part of a community that is influential" "you feel your opinion counts for something" "knowing my comments are read by someone who actually wants to know"
3	Freebie seekers	"you get to know about great biscuits and treats" "receiving the snacks!" "the free samples are nice"
4	Information seekers	"The chance to hear of new snacks and being chosen to try them" "Finding out about new products and sampling them" "receiving e-mails about new products, keeping informed, so I can purchase items that I know are nice and have tried them first"
5	Hobbyists	"The site is fun to visit and about my favourite subject - food!" "thinking about food and whetting my appetite - time to reflect"
6	Information hungry	"Finding out about the new snacks being developed first, and of course getting the chance to try them out! I also enjoyed choosing the packaging and name for the Christmas biscuits" "Getting insider information on new products, the chance to give some feedback and, of course, the free trials!"
7	Geeks	"The layout of the website" "The polls, the surveys & the opportunities to test new products" "This is the most interesting website I am a member of"

Table 1: Typology of motivational factors based on Snackrs.com

The first identified type is the Social Engagement Seeker, these individuals are characterised by comments that indicate interest in interaction with other ORC members. For example, these people might be there because they want to see what others have to say and how they can interact with those interested in a common topic. These individuals highlight the community elements of joint enterprise and collaboration as proposed by Wenger (1998). They are stimulated by intrinsic motivators which contribute to their feeling of belonging to a community, such participant types are more likely to trust others in the community and are likely to be active participants (McLure and Faraj, 2000). Considering the 5 stage model of engagement this participant type will require minimal support at initial access stage, they are predisposed to socialise however, the quality of the information provision and critical reflection as they move to the knowledge construction and development stages may need significant moderator support in order to ensure that a valuable contribution from them is achieved.

The second identified type is the Power Seeker, these individuals are characterised by comments indicating a desire to have some influence, usually with the ORC sponsor (e.g. easyJet). These participants may have a very specific reason for engagement in the community, for example the researchers witnessed extremely active participants in the easyJet ORC who, whilst their contributions were lengthy, were entirely focused on lobbying for the introduction of a seat allocation system on easyJet flights. These individuals had limited sense of community and, when considering the 5 stage model of engagement, whilst providing detailed knowledge constructing dialogue may be so topic focused that their contribution to the collection of wider research data may be limited, effectively there may be a need to find mechanisms to move them back to the early socialisation stage of the model if their contributions cease to be useful or of benefit to the development of the wider community.

The third identified type is the Freebie Seeker, these individuals were motivated to join the ORC in order to gain the extrinsic rewards on offer. Logically the expectation was that the snackrs.com community would have the highest proportion of non-contributing freebie seekers as in this community all registered members of the community were provided with occasional free samples regardless of their level of engagement in the community. However, this community had the lowest proportion of non-contributing members. As this research progresses further investigation will be undertaken regarding whether the free samples act as a stimuli for engagement in the community. Considering the 5 stage model, this community also was the most active in terms of knowledge construction and development – there was a greater tendency to interact and debate with community development activities occurring, for example a lively informal competition concerned with posting photographs of Halloween activities. This activity was only very loosely related to the research issue (Halloween packaged sweets) yet stimulated co-construction of participant views on the subject. For future work there is a clear need to more full understand the influence of extrinsic motivators on ORC contributions.

The fourth and sixth identified types are concerned with information gathering – the Information Seeker and the Information Hungry, these individuals are characterised by comments indicating a desire to learn and gain new information. The differentiating factor between the two types is that the Information Hungry specifically want to gain some form of 'edge' so that they area aware of new developments first. As with Power Seekers, these individuals tended to have a limited sense of community and, when considering the 5 stage model of engagement, whilst they may make some attempts at socialising may tend to move to simple poll responses rather than move towards generating useful co-constructed knowledge. Mechanisms need to be established to ensure that they are drawn into socialising and ultimately moved towards community development.

The fifth identified type is the Hobbyists, these individuals are characterised by having a genuine commitment to the ORC topic area and may make ideal participants. The danger is that they become overbearing within the community, consider for example the participant in snackrs.com who had made 243 posts. When considering this participant type against the 5 staged model of engagement the challenge is to ensure that these types become pivotal members rather than bland information providers, their contribution needs to encourage rather than overwhelm other participants.

Finally the seventh identified type is the Geek, these individuals are characterised by having an interest in the technology rather than the topic. Close attention needs to be maintained on their contribution, for example issues were identified whereby geeks were working through polls without any thought to their responses simply to see what happened at the end.

The typologies analysis is summarised in table 2 which suggests a profile of an ideal online research community participant who could: exhibit community elements (Wenger, 1998), will trust the community (Ardichvili et al., 2003), have intrinsic motivators (Osterloh and Frey, 2000) and could be an active participant (Dwyer et al., 2004). "Social Engagement Seekers" and "Hobbyists" exhibit the ideal fit of such a community member profile. However, there is a drawback to the "Social Engagement Seekers" too – since they are primarily motivated by interactions with others they could potentially contribute too much off topic conversations that might not necessarily be of interest to the

research company and would be perceived as not worthy by the client organisation. On the other hand, the participants who are less encouraged in online research communities are those that exhibit no community membership elements, have no trust in community, are motivated by extrinsic rewards and are generally passive members. "Freebie seekers" illustrate these "worst-case" scenario community members. The other three types are somewhat in the middle exhibiting some positive and some negative attributes. Arguably, there is a need for only the active members of an ORC, who contribute to the discussions, however, those that answer polls and surveys are also important to the research company. For example those who do not contribute to discussions but do answer poll questions have a useful community role.

Nr	Type	Community elements	Trust between community membership	Motivators	Participation
1	*Social engagement seekers*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Intrinsic*	*Active*
2	Power seekers	No	No	Intrinsic	Active
3	**Freebie seekers**	**No**	**No**	**Extrinsic**	**Passive**
4	Information seekers	No	Yes	Intrinsic	Passive
5	*Hobbyists*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Intrinsic*	*Active*
6	Information hungry	No	Yes	Intrinsic	Active
7	Geeks	No	Yes	Intrinsic	Passive

Table 2: Tendencies of the motivational factors

4.2 Moderator Interaction

Three focus groups each consisting of 2 moderators were undertaken. The moderators who participated in these focus groups had varying degrees of experience and, given the novelty of such research conducted in ORC, many have had no or limited previous employment experience in moderation. The moderators were all technology aware and most of them were part of some social networking groups or online communities so that they had the experience of being a member of NOOCs themselves. Their moderator training consisted mainly of observing a more experienced colleague who introduced them to the technology and explained the processes, custom and practice of moderation. Their age profile was mid 20s-30s. The focus group data was digitally recorded, transcribed and analysed using QSR NVivo 7 software. The analysis resulted in a number of themes that were then clustered into the following categories.

Moderator Role and Challenges

The moderators saw their role as an intermediary between the client and the participants, that they were relationship building with the participants, they perceived that they were acting as a *'middle man'* and that their responsibility was to accurately summarise the participants' responses in order to represent the participants' views to the client. The moderators argued that they genuinely took notice of what participants were saying and the perception was that their relationship was more geared towards the participants needs than that of the client, the moderators who were perceived to run the more successful ORCs stated that they were *'friends'* of the participants.

"I just get involved as a friend almost but obviously with a research topic I have to sort of remain impartial and not give any opinion, just kind of extract more information from people, but with topics that are sort of fun then I just usually give it [my opinion] *as if I was a member really"*

"I think the role of the moderator is the person who faces the community and deals with the people on the communities, almost like their shepherd to a certain extent, whereby you've maybe got your

research, or the client and their issues, the role of the moderator is really to help people on the site, help direct conversation, … Really know the people on the community inside out, spend time to get to know them, understand the tonality, the language and the unwritten rules of the community that you don't just pick up by looking at it once or twice, otherwise you can only get by being part of that community for a period of time by spending lots of time on the site"

The above two views are different to the role of moderators in NOOCS, in the ORCs pressures are placed on the moderators to have an additional dimension to their role, that of research manager who is required to fulfil the research objectives set by the client organisation. They identified that they had a dichotomous responsibility, on the one hand they were required to satisfy client expectation, nurturing responses and directing the community to focus on the specified research agenda whilst on the other hand they were required to keep the participants happy and engaged which frequently required them to steer participants away from active discussions that were 'off topic'. It is illustrated by one of the respondents who felt that this was their primary role as an ORC moderator:

"I would say that the primary role of the moderator is research focussed in getting more depth and colour and picture of what you discuss"

Interestingly, the moderators largely found meeting the client's agenda to be much more challenging and they raised issues concerned with the client being unaware of the difficulties that moderators encountered.

"It's a difficult one because we do try and do fun topics but sometimes the pressure of client deadlines and the actual research topic, it doesn't give you as much…like I'm supposed to set an hour a week aside to think up a fun topic or to do some kind of like a news story or something and it…oh I hardly ever get round to doing it"

"clients don't understand the processes that we have to go through to do the research and get the report done and they don't…because I think…and it's not really their fault because they're getting sold on their community the fact that it's quick turnaround and all that kind of stuff, it's not really their fault but I think they just underestimate the work that has to go into get something done and they're just like 'Why can't you do it in 5 days?'. Because it's not 5 days work, that's why we can't do it in 5 days!"

"I think it makes a difference that you take time out to respond to stuff that isn't research related, because I think they've got a bit more trust in you and they like you a bit more if you're responding back to them"

The above three quotes provide a flavour of issues that place a strain of deadlines to the moderation of ORCs. In particular, the issue of speed is perceived as a factor that does not allow a moderator to encourage community behaviours within ORCs since their focus is driven by research objectives. This requirement to direct ORC contributions towards the research related questions does potentially provide a strain on the members of the community and may discourage community development. This also reinforces participation behaviour that exhibits no community interest such as Power Seekers, Freebie Seekers, Information Seekers, Information Hungry and Geeks (see table 2) and may provide a potential reason to explain the lack of engagement of some members who may feel that they are not being "nurtured". Furthermore, if we compare this practice to the factors affecting loyalty in NOOCs (Brandtzæg and Heim, 2008), we can observe a parallel development, that the lack of interesting people/friends in the community and the potential lack of interesting content can de-motivate members. As community discussions in ORCs are predominantly dictated by the moderator. the development of interesting issues that might be of some value to the community members (such as allocated seating in easyJet communities) are not encouraged. This challenge of developing the community characteristic is further evident in the community management theme as discussed next.

Community Management

The moderators identified that there were a number of issues with participant expectation and lack of understanding that they were participating in a Research 2.0 and not a Web 2.0 community. For example, many participants assumed that they had some sort of influence and that the community was facilitating customer driven business change. In addition, the moderators highlighted that, despite their intervention and encouragement, there was limited participant-to-participant discussion.

"First, I find a discrepancy between is the whole view of Web2.0 and it being customer generated, customer led. On the other hand, we've got the client with their constant demands and constant discussion guides, they want to talk about this so we'll get everybody to talk about this, it's not really customer led it's not the way we're promoted to be. When customers talk they don't really listen"

"it should be more respondent-driven hopefully … I don't think it's a good way to keep people engaged and it certainly wouldn't keep me coming back to the community, if I felt that three days of the week they weren't listening and two they were"

The above two quotes suggest that the notion of Web2.0 has not been fully taken on board by the clients of these ORCs, who it appears, are primarily interested in comments and feedback on their research aims. Whilst this is logical as the ORC's purpose is to collect market research data it is at odds with the traditional views of online communities where, within reason, 'off topic' discussion is seem as a benefit. Furthermore within the studied ORCs the notion that the participants may proactively generate an idea or concept outside of the confines of the specified research topic that the client subsequently adopts and develops into a service or a product has not been fully considered or encouraged. However, it is important to note that not all of the three communities were viewed by their commissioning clients in a similar way. For example one client did appear to be more open to the notion of community development as well as giving the moderators more time to develop their research:

"Although we're actually trying to improve that and get more people involved and …in terms of deadlines …[the client] suggested to us last week that we should have more time to do some work - which is a first! …[the client] … tries to educate the people internally how long stuff takes"

The notion of having more time to develop a discussion is a positive development and could potentially lead to community elements developing amongst the ORCs. Our findings are worrying, since as it was identified in our literature review, moderators play a crucial role which, if done correctly, can encourage community development whilst if only specific types of, 'on topic' discussions encouraged it may be of detriment to the community (Ardichvili et al., 2003; Stamps, 1997; Stewart, 1997; Ward, 2000; Weiss, 2001). Furthermore, when referring to the 5 stage model we realise that there has to be a time when certain discussions are taking place which are entirely for the benefit of the members such as the first stage of "Online Socialisation". To some extent the studied communities appear to be primarily functioning at the "Information Giving and Receiving" stage, which is consistent with the conventional view of online surveys – instead of filling in online questionnaires members are simply posting their answers to a research question. The higher levels of engagement of "Knowledge Construction" and "Development" were not widely evident in the current format of the ORC interaction.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper has outlined two key issues for ORCs, firstly issues surrounding how to improve the engagement of online research community members and secondly moderator roles in ORCs. In order

to support our research we have framed the data collection and analysis within an adaptation of Salmon's model for e-moderation (Salmon, 2004).

To address the first aim of our paper, we have provided a motivational typology based on users' beliefs. ORC developers can use this for identification of future member types, recruitment and development of incentives and interfaces to suit certain kinds of behaviour. For example, to encourage 'Social Engagement Seeker' type of behaviour, more 'fun' activities could perhaps be introduced to facilitate community building and not necessarily focus on the core research community purpose. This would allow members to get to know each other and allow those who entered the community at a later stage to catch up and see the "human side of interaction".

The research to date has begun to suggest a profile of an 'idealised' ORC participant who would: exhibit community elements, will trust the community, have intrinsic motivators and be an active participant. Those individuals who would fit this ideal profile are 'Social Engagement Seekers' and 'Hobbyists. However, there is a drawbacks to such idealised participants. For example, the 'Social Engagement Seeker' is primarily motivated by interactions with others hence they could potentially contribute too many off-topic conversations that may not necessarily be of interest to the client. On the other hand the participants who are less engaged in online research communities are those that exhibit no community membership, have no trust in community, are motivated by extrinsic rewards and are passive, for example the 'Freebie Seeker'. Arguably, there is a need for only active members of the community, who contribute to the discussions, however, those that answer polls and surveys are important to the research company when they are trying to establish a generalisable view on a specific topic.

The second key issue to be drawn from the paper if the role of the moderator in ORCs. In traditional NOOCs the role of the moderator is typically to act as a moral or social guide, to stimulate debate and to police poor behaviour. In an ORC the moderator has a fundamentally different and dichotomous role. Firstly they are required to act as the agent of the client who has commissioned the ORC topic and secondly they must act, as in NOOCs, as guide and encourager whilst at the same time steering the participants to remain 'on topic'. Considering this Janus-faced role of the moderator also highlights additional future issues for ORCs. In traditional market research activity, even focus groups, there is no notion of the need or desire to create 'community', the market research participants are typically anonymous or at least the relationship is linear, a direct interaction occurs between the market researcher and the participant. Even in focus group sessions, whilst the intention may be to stimulate debate, the group is usually brought together for single period over a single or short time period. In ORCs the desired engagement from participants is fundamentally different, their engagement should ideally be long term and networked rather than the traditionally more directional moderator/market researcher: participant model. In the findings presented here there appears to be a learning curve for both ORC moderators, participants and perhaps most importantly commissioning clients to consider – in order for ORC communities to thrive it is perhaps the commissioning clients who need to reconsider their role and become active participants before the community recognises that they are not community members but research subjects. However, we recognise that in Online Research Communities the word Research comes first and so will this task of research objectives be more important than Community development objectives, but we argue that in order to have a sustainable over a longer period of time and meaningful community engagement and membership, it is important that community development activities are given more attention.

The above conclusions are aimed at primarily contributing to the ORC literature and secondarily to moderation of general online communities. The typology requires further refinement and this is a research direction that we are taking, however, other studies in other communities would benefit this process and allow us to better understand online communities moderation. We feel that the 5 Stage e-moderation model is a useful guiding point for discussion of all online research communities and not only the educational settings where they were initially developed, however, the role of the moderator in accomplishing the research objectives should be developed at stages two to five of the 5 Stage e-moderation model.

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