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# TRIBALISM AND CONFLICT: CONFLICT AS A SOCIAL UNIFIER IN A TECHNOLOGICALLY ENABLED COMMUNITY

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## Abstract

*Online communities are complex and fluid environments that do not readily submit to critical examinations by the Information Systems research community. This paper offers a perspective on these communities that identifies a conflict-based taxonomy of roles and identities. This enables the potential for more erudite discussions that explore the full scope and implications of these communities within the contemporary Information Systems context. We identify three core roles with online communities as the initial genera in a possibly expansive taxonomy of identities. These roles, the Big Man, the Sorcerer and the Trickster can all be identified within the online finance forum. This forum is used by this paper as a specific example of the taxonomy of online community participant's roles. The paper stresses that these roles are reliant to a large degree on their position within a community and are not in themselves identities that can be sustained in isolation.*

**Keywords:** Conflict analysis, anthropology, tribalism, ethnography, technologically enabled communities

## Introduction

Trust is the framework most commonly utilized in Information Systems research for discussing the variety of social interactions that unify and structure online communities (see Knights, 2001; Garsten, 2001; Stewart, 2000; Geyskens, Steenkamp and Kumar, 1998; McKnight, Cummings and Chervany, 1998). Trust, it is argued, is a culturally and historically specific discourse grounded in a range of assumptions regarding human association and organization (Shapiro, 1987; Muyskens, 1998; Tweney, 1998). As a means of interpretation, trust presents a problematic and disputed territory that may be more readily construed as a management technique than a basis for analysis. In contrast, the discursive relationships defined through conflict reveals an alternative set of unifying principles and rationales for social groups, including those that are technologically enabled.

This study considers the extent to which online communities utilize systematized and ritualized techniques of hostility and aggression in a form of contemporary "tribalism". These practices assist in maintaining and defining tribal boundaries through the implicit threat of further, more direct, action (Keesing, 1981). The most obvious form of this potential punitive action, in the context of technological enabled groups can be identified as a form of banishment. This study is based on an ethnographic examination of a technologically enabled interest group that is defined by participation and presence in a public Internet finance forum. This reveals the importance of "tribe"-like group boundaries and the belligerent techniques that maintain them. This technologically-enabled community participates in practices of story telling, myth-making and the reaffirmation of extended, affinal, relationships to interact and construct their "tribal" view of the social world (Benedict, 1935). These "community building" methods are conducted within an atmosphere that incorporates the continual conflict of the group's leaders and other dominant personalities, its "Big Men", "Sorcerers" and "Tricksters" (Glasse, 1965). These almost ritualized practices of conflict assist in further unifying and defining this online community more clearly than could be possible with any specific application of trust

networks or association. The classificatory schema utilized by this study is broad in its focus, however, the richness of the environment examined offers the possibility for more detailed taxonomies of participant's relative roles within an online community.

The finance forum observed in this research provides an interesting research context for investigating the role of conflict as a social unifier. The overarching objective of most finance forum participants is to profit from the trading of stock market securities. As a group, the forum purpose and utility is paradoxical. On one hand, forum members are allies-in-arms attempting to collaboratively generate strategy and uncover information that might assist them in their mutual aim of achieving monetary gain from trading or investing in financial markets. However, these same allies are often also adversaries, taking opposing positions in specific transactions of securities. The nature of stock market trading reinforces this contradictory relationship - for every transaction there MUST be at least one buyer and one seller. Hence, the conflict between the needs of the self and of the other is a fundamental constituent in the relationships that are developed and endure on Internet finance forums.

## The Problems of Interpreting Online Forums

The problem of interpreting technologically enabled groups and understanding the defining qualities of groups that have no definite physical boundary is the source of many debates within Information Systems literature. Identifying groups that are distinct within a culture is not a new problem and one that has its heritage in the earliest ethnographic works of anthropologists such as Malinowski (1979) and Radcliffe-Brown (1977). At the core of the problem is the need for the researcher to identify a coherent community that is not unique or defined solely by difference, either physically, historically, technologically, organizationally or structurally.

We argue an alternative interpretative path for understanding these groups can be charted between the extremes of the individualized psychological motivations of trust communities and the nihilistic assimilation of more post-modern positions. Addressing technologically enabled groups as conflict communities, or tribal groups, presents a range of research possibilities and understandings. While the concept of a "tribe" is a contentious and much-debated category within Anthropology it is, nonetheless, a well-documented and analyzed level of organization and community that is smaller than a cultural group but wider than the associations brought through direct kinship. In fact, the anthropological notion of tribe substantially mirrors Information Systems' sometimes diffuse and amorphously labeled "organization". However, the parallels do not end at this level of comparison. A major debating point in discussions of tribes and tribalism is the relationship that exists *between* tribes (Keesing 1935; Salisbury 1965; Evans-Pritchard 1976). While tribes may conduct various forms of warfare against other tribes it is often also the same "enemies" who provide marriage partners and strategic allies against other aggressors. Organizations, as a single whole entity, must also interact with one another in variously competitive and strategic relationships (e.g. Microsoft and Apple or Microsoft and IBM). In effect, both tribes and organizations do not act or exist in isolation from others and are largely defined by their relationship to other similarly organized groups. The difference between the relationships to others and the relationship to ones' own group may be a subtle difference of degrees. Aggression and conflict are as readily discerned internally within a group among its individuals as it can be seen enacted towards the collective others of a competing tribe.

Previous studies of communication in networked communities have viewed conflict as a dysfunctional force and hence sought to find the conditions that lead to conflict resolution. In contrast, this study views conflict as an integral element of the social interrelations found within finance forums. We therefore commence with the premise that conflict has both functional and dysfunctional outcomes. This conflict-oriented analysis provides a useful vehicle for analyzing Internet finance forums as it explicitly recognizes the existence and persistence of discord and dissonance. It highlights the simultaneous pressures for both collaboration and competition within the group and indicates that these two divergent social forces are necessary but incongruent and cannot be completely resolved.

Avison and Myers (1995) argue there is value in using an anthropological perspective to explore the complexities of information systems phenomena. They state that "the value of an anthropological perspective is illustrated by looking at the relationship between information technology and organizational culture." This paper attempts to contribute to this neglected IS research area by directly applying anthropological theory to the examination of organizational culture within an online finance forum. Further to this, as one of the researchers is an anthropologist, we similarly subscribe to the sentiments of Jones and Rafaeli (2000, p. 2). They state "there is a strong case [that] can be made for the cross-fertilization from anthropology to the study of Computer Mediated Communication" and in this case technologically enabled communities (Jones and Rafaeli 2000, p. 2).

## **Method**

The research method employed for this study is broadly ethnographic in style. It draws upon the research foundations presented and articulated in anthropology and utilizes an ethnographic approach for data collection. Ethnographic analysis is not linked primarily to a set time frame of research but instead has the objective of providing thorough, careful and accurate exploration of the range of lived experience of the research subjects (Atkinson 1990, p. 106). Emphasis is usually placed upon detailing particular events and happenings that occurred at a research site. In general, the ethnographer long term experience with the culture enables them to identify exemplary events that encapsulate the sentiments and experiences of the group at a broader level. The practitioner of ethnographic analysis, by accumulating and assimilating their contact with a range of informants, aims to provide a broad account of those informants' lived experience and life-world that is also informed by the researcher's own expertise and sensitivity to the subject.

The community examined in this paper is a group of online participants from an Australian-based stock market and finance forum. We examine the interchanges of key individuals in the community to obtain a broad understanding of the roles and the relationships they maintain with others in the group. We also examine how these key members use conflict to unify the community itself. While the focus of the examples presented in this research centers upon a limited number of individuals, this is not the most significant level of organization for the community. Cataloguing and detailing individual actions and antagonisms reveal the composition, dynamics and solidarity of the "tribe". Each of the characters identified as being central to the activities of the overall tribe assumes one of the roles discussed in this paper. Their interactions are presented because they are participants within the community and not in recognition of their individual characteristic attributes. It is the continuous cycle of conflict among these individuals, within the context of the group that provides the central communal focal points and offers mechanisms through which community is maintained. The dynamism and continuous evolution of the community is similarly revealed by the changing relationships between key members of the group and the fact that their roles are achieved and maintained only with the continuing support of at least part of the community.

## **Conflict and Tribalism**

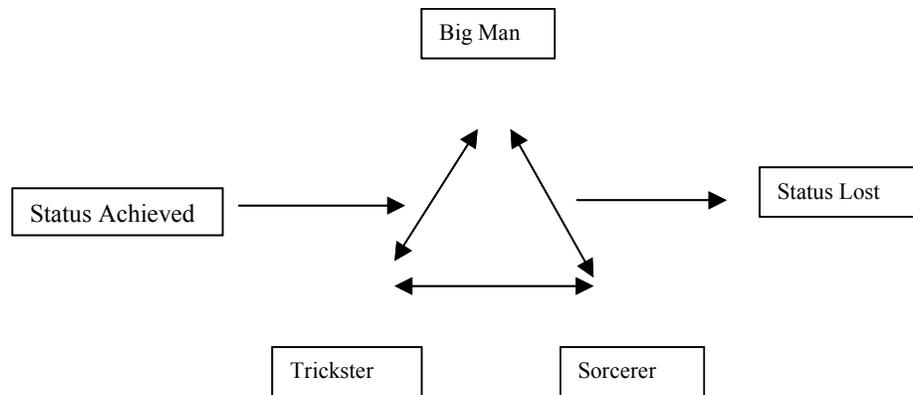
While the examples utilized here are drawn from the interactions of contemporary stock market and finance fora, a significant body of research exists in social anthropology that also concerns itself with the conflictual interrelationships of participants in a community. The most concentrated collection of this form of work concerns the organization of the Papua New Guinea Highland tribes. Within these ethnographies conflict, both physical and threatened, is a regular and commonly described feature. The volume of work in this area offers three advantages to this paper:

- The importance of conflict in these tribes is confirmed by the repetitiveness with which it is cited;
- The number of separate ethnographers making these observations independently suggests that it is not just a flight of fantasy on the part of colonial anthropologists; and
- The range and scope of these works enables a broad taxonomy of community roles to be discerned and understood at a conceptual level.

It is this final point that is of most direct utility to this paper as it is this taxonomy that enables a structured examination of the different participants of the online forum. In this taxonomy we focus on what, in the context of the data gathered to date, are arguably the three most significant roles, that of "Big Man", "Sorcerer" and "Trickster". However, as taxonomy, opportunities exist for still finer granularity of discussion as the research progresses. Within each of the three roles presented in this paper further analytical sub-divisions are possible and identifiable. Similarly, other distinct or hybrid roles may also be identified with a more detailed taxonomic analysis of "tribal" roles. Identifying the many subtleties of conflict role interaction it is hoped will offer additional insight into the forms of conflict that can be observed, their different meanings and the impact of these actions on online communities as a whole.

A key shift found in this paper's approach from that of other discussions of networked communities is our attempt to analyze and discuss our textual evidence, the transcripts of the discussions in the forum, in a manner that moves away from textual analysis and existing IS ethnographies. We are attempting to discern the inter linkage of conversations that bind sometimes disparate and disconnected thoughts and actions into a community. We present the examination of simple threads as they are defined by forum's particular software to focus attention upon key participants' actions and activities.

The three roles of key significance we identify in the online finance forum form a trinary of interlinked association and are illustrated in Figure 1. The holders of each role are defined, at least in part, by their interaction with the other holders of key community roles. While individuals do not identify themselves in the terms we employ here, their actions generally indicate an awareness of both those with similar roles as well as those who occupy a different role in relation to their own. This trinary also represents the potential directions for changes in status that are available to these participants. While this shift in roles is capable of moving in any direction between these three roles, there is a tendency for individual's to move away from the trickster role to more the "mature" roles of sorcerer and Big Man. While only a limited number of participants in the community move into this cycle of key roles, there is an eventual departure of those occupying the dominant roles in this cycle. These departures are seemingly inevitable over time. This formation and reformulation, coincidentally, reflects the work of Levi-Strauss's structuralism.



**Figure 1. Interaction Between Holders of Key Community Roles**

### ***The Big Men***

One of the best-known tribal figures is that of the "Big Man". The historical context of this role we identify is predominantly masculinist, we acknowledge this gender bias in our description, however these taxonomic terms emphasize the purpose of the study. In the context of our research of online community studies, the Big Man signifies either a male or female participant. The Big Man is the leader of either a whole tribal group, or a less formal faction of the main group, such as a phratry or band in anthropological discourse. The significant fact about these individuals is that leadership is achieved and not, in most cases, directly linked to family lineage or ascription. The earliest anthropologists initially saw this proposition as a curiosity. Big Men, by the same token, do not enjoy the privileges of permanency in their role. The position requires maintenance and is dependent upon the continued backing of supporters. Traditionally, the role of Big Man is garnered in a variety of ways and generally support is sought through the sharing of gifts in various forms. In the Papua New Guinean context, the Big Man provides to the community with a series of feasts and celebrations. The capacity of the Big Man to support these activities is generally seen as indication of their continued capabilities to maintain their position. The obligations that receiving gifts entails (Mauss 1954, p. 65) cements the continuing support of other "lesser" men in the community.

In most tribal situations, there is no one Big Man but rather many Big Men. The relationship between these men can fluctuate through the entire range of human emotions. However, in most tribal situations the relationship tends towards a median of amicability. One of the skills of being a Big Man is the ability to expertly execute diplomacy as much as the ability to fight. The collective of Big Men in tribes such as the Siane (Salisbury 1965, p. 53) form a *de facto* council whom together confirms social policy and practices.

In this variety of ways, Big Men are pivotal figures in the community. They negotiate a form of order and stability for the majority of the group members by personally absorbing or deflecting many conflictual situations away from the group. The requirement to achieve the role itself, however, has a level of dynamism, as ambitious men jostle with existing Big Men to achieve the status that the role provides.

The role of Big Man is readily seen within the online finance forum discussion group where this form of leadership is taken up and maintained. In the environment of the finance forum, the Big Men provide a mediating and managerial role that is not related to the mechanical moderation of a forum but rather to the social organization and maintenance of the community. Big Men, as

benefits their role and as a consequence of their knowledge, can also distribute gifts in the form of information relating to the price movements of particular securities to "lesser" participants. The Big Man in this situation is under no obligation to provide these gifts but to do so ensures longevity in their role and the continued receipt of the prestige that this may hold.

Similarly, the Big Man is under no obligation to respond to queries from "his" supporters. His role within the community moves widely outside these more petty circles. In many cases the Big Man is content to let "his" words be repeated by others. The Big Man will only intercede where he sees fit for example when a supporter quotes the advice of another Big Man or when "his" words have completely lost their original intent.

The Big Men ensure the relatively stable continuity of the community by restricting his conflict primarily to other Big Men. These conflicts themselves may produce the unexpected side effect of small gifts of information to loyal but silent supporters.

Inevitably, the role of Big Man is a temporary one. There are others waiting to assume the role at signs of weakness or when the gifts of information imparted by the Big Man do not warrant the obligation of once loyal supporters. The former Big Man can disappear to become a ghost-like figure, occasionally referred to by former supporters. Alternately, opportunities may exist to again achieve the status of Big Man.

The Big Men are not the only players on this stage and while they may be the most respected and sought after individuals in the community their position is also pre-requisite on the presence of others who assume different sometimes antagonistic roles.

### ***The Sorcerers***

Another key figure also found in the literature on tribalism in Papua New Guinea and elsewhere is the Sorcerer. The Tangu, a New Guinean highlands tribe, describe sorcerers as *ranguma*, "the non-reciprocal man, a man who will not engage his reciprocities as do others" (Burrige 1965, p. 230). With such importance placed on the obligations that receipt of the gifts that a Big Man offers, to not reciprocate clearly disrupts the order and stability of the community. The sorcerer, while participating in the community also set themselves apart from that community. "They do not conform with the community ethic" and are not thought of being part of the community. The sorcerer manipulates people within the community by precipitating and perpetuating moral conflict. Their actions are not happenstance or spontaneous, they are a pre-meditated thief with a clearly thought out purpose.

The inhabitants of South Pentecost claim sorcerers have the skill of shape shifting. They are able to assume forms that best suit their own needs. While traditional societies provide a metaphysical position for shape shifting, it is also a capability enabled by computer-mediated communication. Identities in the finance forum are reliant upon the individual participants themselves furnishing the identity. The forum itself relies upon the simple but clearly naïve assumption that one physical user will equate with a single forum identity. Shape-shifting can be accomplished simply by assuming a new nickname and, for more sophisticated shape-shifters, is reinforced by shifting stated loyalties, changing support for a particular security, using different grammatical styles or even changing the accuracy of the spelling in postings. This capacity is a repeated focus for discussion in the finance forum just as it is an often-used source of stories in traditional cultures. In the context of the role of the sorcerer, it is important for community members to be able to identify and protect themselves from the possibly nefarious consequences of a shape shifter's action. At the very least, it is important to identify the veracity of the claims and the level of threat that shape-shifters' activities have upon the community. The difficulty of detecting a shape-shifter can also be accentuated in extreme situations when the identity being used is not a new one but that of another community member. Identity theft can not only be immediately damaging it can also have long term consequences for the person who has had their identify stolen. In the finance forum examined, this form of the theft is difficult to undertake and still harder to document.

Not all shape-shifters, however, are necessarily sorcerers. Other key identities may also utilize this technique for different and less destructive purposes. Similarly individual's attempting to assume more significant roles within the community may experiment with shape shifting in order to better understand and test the community. Detecting the various purposes and identities that motivate an individual's use of shape shifting requires experience with, and a familiarity of, the community. A combination of skills that is most readily found amongst the Big Men.

The sorcerer, as the habitual thief, takes the gift of information provided in the finance forum, from those who offer to benefit themselves. They do not offer support to, or recognition of, the Big Men in reciprocation unless they see an immediate and direct benefit in doing so for their own position. The sorcerer, as the disrupter, assumes the role of the "ramper", the person who will offer information to the whole community in order to benefit their own position. This is done with little or no regard for the

detrimental effects that this may have on other individuals within the community. These actions, because sorcerers never directly define themselves in this way and are motivated by different agendas to that of the overall community, can generate conflict between Big Men. The sorcerer's actions can even, on occasion, be seen as supportive and informative for other members of the community. In these circumstances the sorcerer can be seen by parts of the community as a positive and beneficial member. Precipitating this conflict provides the sorcerer with benefits that override any concerns for the stability of the whole community. Identifying the multi-faceted, tactical and self-motivated actions of the sorcerer for what they are requires skill and experience and is generally outside the abilities of all in the community except other sorcerers and the Big Men.

### ***The Tricksters***

The trickster is generally a comical figure and a relief from the seriousness of daily life. They often occupy this role as a result of inexperience or naiveté. While they may sometimes be mistaken for a sorcerer, or even a Big Man, their antics are usually nothing more than an annoyance. However, in a finance forum, the trickster's actions can become a costly annoyance. In general, they do not consider the consequences of their actions. The "trick" is performed for the sake of the trick itself. If a trickster performs a stock ramping activity it is not to benefit their own position, they may not even own the security. Their actions are more closely akin to that of an experiment, proof for perhaps no one other than the trickster that they can manipulate people. The trickster's own inexperience and naiveté may also be their motivation. By performing various tricks they become more experienced in the motivations and sentiments that shape the community. This acquisition of knowledge may eventually enable them to assume a new role as sorcerer or big man. The position of the trickster also makes them vulnerable to manipulation by other tricksters and by sorcerers. In traditional descriptions of the trickster's role they are often connected with sorcerers and their actions are often claimed to be driven by a sorcerer's own motives. As a consequence of this relationship, the trickster is primarily understood through their connection to the actions and conflict of big men and sorcerers.

In the background to these identifiable trinity of characters are the vast majority of the community who do not participate in the conflict of the community. While they are broad targets for the activities of the sorcerers and tricksters, they do not occupy individual roles of importance. They offer generally tacit support to particular Big Men and accept gifts of information in exchange. The support is revealed in the maintenance of stability within the community and the steady continuity of the dominant framework of roles and relationships.

## **Conflict Analysis: An Example of Conflict Between Big Men**

Various forms of conflict can be identified with the online forum. However, it is not possible within the confines of this paper to present them all. An exemplary example is presented here to illustrate the usefulness of conflict analysis for interpreting the interactions of an online forum. The situation presented here depicts the continuous jostling between Big Men within this forum and highlights the support and unification conflict-based activities provide for this community.

### ***Minotaur: The Big Man***

Minotaur is one group member who holds the role of Big Man in the forum. Minotaur came into predominance and assumed the role of Big Man within the group through winning a series of stock tipping competitions. During this time in the development of the online finance forum, its participants were hotly following stock tipping competitions. These competitions were set up as early community activities to initiate community interaction. Further incentives were provided to the winners in monetary terms. The basic prize money was a \$250 remuneration. These competitions also formalized many of the community's rules and regulation. It gave group members a set time to display their knowledge of securities publicly. Minotaur was the most consistent winner and he continues to build his status as a knowledgeable group member, as a "Big Man" in our terms.

Minotaur now holds a privileged position in the group. He doesn't post frequently but when he does he provides a full perspective. He posts his recommendations based on his own experiences. As part of this privileged status he also doesn't reply all the time to those seeking his advice. In his "real life" persona he is a warrant trader and appears to provide very good predictions that are accurate about 80% of the time. He presents a balanced perspective on a security's position and importantly, for the group, is simplistic in his representation of the associated risks for the trade. He is a valued member of the community. Minotaur in his "Big Man" role of leader also provides praise to other community members. For example, he will proclaim the bravery of those members who maintain their position in a risky trading environment. Minotaur receives confirmation and backup of his leading

role through the praise and acknowledgement of other group members. While others challenge his authority and the veracity of his advice. These challenges are clearly conflictual events and it is one of these incidents that we utilize to present the significance of conflict analysis in the interpretation of these communities.

Conflict can be readily identified when it is targeted at Big Men. In this case, conflict arises when an aspiring Big Man called Crashy, attempts to discredit the authoritative position of Minotaur. Crashy proclaims his challenge by announcing his own abilities to the group. However, Crashy's efforts to be considered seriously are attacked and a barrage of aggressive comments are returned by Minotaur's supporters. The result, in this case, clearly indicates that he is not capable of sustaining the leading role he is trying to claim. Ultimately Minotaur's supporters and the community dismiss his claim.

This example starts with Minotaur giving a gift to the group reconfirming his authority. It begins with the general announcement:

*Trading ALERT.*

*Situations like this don't come too often. Stocks jumping too high or dropping too fast. This is basic Economics, DEMAND V's SUPPLY and the over-reaction on peoples Psychology etc.. Bulls V's Bears.*

*QAN has had a great jump up with strength but the Bears will come in over the next few days and push the price down slightly. Let the Bulls play and push QAN higher today and tomorrow...and then there will be a QUICK trade on the put Warrant QANWMV at 11 cents.*

*With QAN i'm pointing to the obvious and alerting posters for a QUICK in and out trade over a 2/3 day period. let the overseas buyers act tonight on the Qantas news and then the pull back...so QANWMV is the BEST warrant to trade. Must watch depth very close tomorrow and be ready.*

*With MAY they have over-reacted on the report and looks to bounce tomorrow or Wednesday. Best Call warrant to trade for a QUICK in and out is MAYWPD at 9 cents. Support on MAY seems to be holding around the \$5.80/90 level. Resistance is at \$6.00.*

*This could happen tomorrow or Wednesday. I'm alerting posters to be ready for a QUICK trade over the next few days with a 2/3 day in and out trade.*

*Watch MAY very close and see how the Buyers and Sellers are acting etc.. I am NOT IN THE WARRANTS YET.. but watching very close on both QAN and MAY for a trade over the next day or two.*

*QAN can still have a few more days of a run and MAY another day or two of drops. Watch the last 15 Minutes of the day.*

*QAN still going up and MAY still dropping. MAY could...?? bounce early tomorrow.*

*The opportunity might be tomorrow morning or some time later in the day.*

*QANWMV and MAYWPD. One call and one put play. I'm getting ready. Those who care take a closer look.*

*Regards,*

*MINOTAUR.*

Praise and confirmation regarding the veracity of his call follow this announcement. However, Crashy takes the opportunity to post a copy of earlier dialogue between Minotaur and another poster. Crashy posts his message under the title *Minotaur ramping himself again*. Part of the recycled conversation reads:

*Great call Minotaur,*

*I have been reading your posts the last couple of years and I am finally going to use the information that you give. Thanks, its a pleasure reading your posts.*

Crashy infers a shape-shifting by Minotaur when he adds:

*Ummmmmm.....last couple of years? Thats quite funny considering you have only been a member for 8 months. Also note you only have 230 logins and this is their FIFTH post. Clearly this person is trying to add credibility to one of their other nicks.*

Minotaur then asserts his own call and reminds Crashy, and more importantly the group, of his successful track record. He also challenges Crashy's abilities and authority to act in a similar capacity. He reveals his attitude as a big man by claiming not to care about who uses his announcements or who reads his posts. Minotaur's apparently casual attitude reinforces his big man role.

*I was alerting posters to WATCH QAN and MAY close Thursday ( yesterday ) for a quick trade in and out. I was not wrong...the trade was there...bad luck that most are tooo slow to act.*

*Why are getting on my back Crashy? What have i done or said about you and your trades or picks etc...have YOU made any lately?*

*You seem do be attacking my alerts etc.. all i'm doing is alerting posters to a situation and pointing to a POSSIBLE trade. Posters then make up their own minds and do as they please. WHY DON'T YOU TRY DOING BETTER.*

*You send me E-mails asking ME, to join your discussion group on another site, because you want to have THE BEST TRADERS talking amongst each other...but every time i post an ALERT POINTING to a POSSIBLE SITUATION, you knock my words etc.. WHY????*

*I said tomorrow or FRIDAY is what i meant, when i posted Wednesday, not Wednesday as i wrote...my mistake on the day, was not thinking.*

*I said QAN will go higher the next day and then pull back for A QUICK TRADE....QANWMV hit a low of 9.5 and went to 14 cents.. i said to look very close for this trade to get IN and OUT.*

*With MAY i said the same that Thursday would be the day to watch close for the price to hit a low and to get into the call warrant MAYWPD at the best price.. which was 5.6 to 6 cents...I DID and now it is at 7.2/7.4 cents.*

*Remember on my post i said tomorrow or Wednesday...means Thursday or Friday.. but i said the best chance will be Thursday afternoon...read MY POST CORRECTLY.*

*CRASHY get off my case and find and post some in and out trades for the rest of us, like i do.*

*If i'm so wrong and can't trade then WHY do YOU ask me to join YOUR group, to discuss stocks etc, with all these other hot shot traders you claim to be. Why e-mail me and ask me when i'm not sooo good in your eyes.*

*What is your problem??*

*Do i knock your posts...NEVER. Once upon a time you actually supported my trades etc...have you forget all the great trades i have pointed out over the years etc.. all the valuable and constructive analysis/information and knowledge i have posted about etc.. etc..*

*Go make some money and leave me to my trades. I'm NOT asking or care if NO-ONE else trades my alerts, because i trade them and make money from these small and QUICK TRADES.*

*DAY TRADING...in and out on a day or two basis. Why don't you try it hot shot?*

*Again i respond to an ATTACK or KNOCK at my post....and you CRASHY are one who said to stop all this crap of knocking etc.. etc.. and improve this site.*

*Bottom line is I MADE MONEY yesterday and today ..what have you made.. not that i care.*

*I'm still trading MY WAY and who ever wants can read and act on my alerts.. good luck to them. If they don't, I DON'T CARE.*

*MINOTAUR.*

Minotaur supporters vocalize their support and rally against Crashy. Even the supposed claim for authority by the supporter, "I am the best trader here", is moderated by LOL (laughing out loud).

*Minotaur,*

*I agree with your posts, it's just an alert on how you view the price action, its up to the person reading it to make their own mind whether they agree or not.*

*It seems people want to see how much traders make. Why would I show any of these faceless knobs how much you make or have to prove anything.*

*I post my view on stocks. I posted my positions and entries and exits and times but I was attacked because someone thought I was telling lies.*

*Well now I post the price action for stocks and not my positions. There just seems large egos and jealousy that exists in this forum that people like to show their ugly heads and attack guys with a slight gift on making money in the markets.*

*By the way I'm the best trader here! LOL.*

The group reminds Crashy of Minotaur's length of time with the group and then provides him with another target, the sorcerer, Stocko.

*Fair go crashy the guy has got talent so ease up?, go for stocko if you want to tar somebody.*

Crashy has one last attempt at disrupting Minotaur by revealing his own understanding of the market situation.

*Talent? Only talent I can see is being good at patting himself on the back via one of his many alter-egos.*

*As for his calls, they are far from special. Its very easy to be right when you tell people the price will either go up, or go down.*

*"With MAY they have over-reacted on the report and looks to bounce tomorrow or Wednesday." and then "and MAY another day or two of drops." (So.....really you dont know?)*

*"QAN has had a great jump up with strength but the Bears will come in over the next few days and push the price down slightly." and then "QAN can still have a few more days of a run" (again, placing an each way bet so that tomorrow he can bragg about how right he was. URGH!)*

*Pretty hard to be wrong when you do this eh?*

*So what were his calls here?*

*QAN might retrace, but then again it might keep going up. MAY might bounce, but then again it might keep falling. Make sure you pick the absolute top of QAN and buy the warrant he suggests. Since you are too dumb to trade with your own brain, follow the advice of someone who is a legend in his own mind. But since you cant think for yourself, youre gonna have a hard time picking the exact top of qan or the exact bottom of may in order to make money on these foolish plays.*

*Praise advice like this?*

*NEVER!*

Maverick ultimately dismisses the attempt to claim authority with a final comment.

*Bottom line is.....each to their own, every post on this forum are just comments to which we are all entitled. people are not stupid, with time you can identify credible posters. to me MIN TR is a credible poster. if the advice is not appreciated then just ignore it!!!!  
as an umpire of aussie rules my most frequent comment is " go for the ball not the man"*

Within these exchanges there is the constant sense of the distance between the role played out in the online community and the individuals themselves. While speculation constantly surfaces about the multiplicity of identities that particular individuals may hold, few such deceptions are ever revealed comprehensively. A Big Man might use the guise of a trickster to attack or challenge a rival Big Man. In this way, the Big Man is not compromised by a loss of status using tactics associated with the complex machinations of sorcerers.

## Conclusion

This paper offers alternative directions for the examination of phenomena that have increasingly moved into the IS discipline's frame of reference that do not have 'system-like' qualities. Most particularly, this paper approaches the examination of voluntary, fluid and happenstance social organizations that "sit on top of" structured, formally planned information systems. While our example finance forum is Web-based, this paper takes the opinion that the critical examination of conflict as an essential aspect of community offers the means to more fully understand at least some of the relationships between any information system and its users.

The three key points that this paper reveals regarding conflict and the online communities can be summarized in three points:

1. The importance of conflict in online communities is confirmed by the repetitiveness with which it can be observed;
2. The number of separate incidents based around conflict oriented interaction suggests that this is not an isolated or specific experience peculiar to the community we have examined; and
3. The range and scope of these interactions enables the commencement of a broad taxonomy of online community roles to be identified and understood.

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