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Exploring VC Research: A Systematic Literature Review from 1985 to 2008
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Abstract:
Virtual community (hereinafter VC) research has rising fast in last two decades accompanying the diffusion of Internet applications. Although the diversity of its research topics, the many problems it addresses and its theoretical foundations, less is known about the state-of-the-art of the field. This study is the first attempt to synthesize VC studies in a systematic literature analysis and has given the current researcher a snapshot of VC studies through a series of literature analysis from mainly three perspectives: basic statistics profile analysis, research method analysis, and research topical. Twelve aspects of these three perspectives have been analyzed based on literature analysis of 206 papers from 139 journals extracted for ISI Web of Science® database. All the three aspects of analysis imply that VC study is still in the very early stage of development focusing on theories building, concept discussion, system development, but is growing very fast.