

Designing collaborative services on the digital platform

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ABSTRACT

This paper is based on an on-going doctoral research on service design for social innovation and sustainability. It introduces the notion of collaborative service and discusses its two dimensions in relation to ICT (information communication technologies). Case studies of collaborative service on the digital platform were conducted to identify the role of ICT in developing and diffusing collaborative service and a part of the result is introduced.

Author Keywords

Service design, sustainability, social innovation, P2P (Peer-to-Peer), ICT, social network, collaboration

ACM Classification Keywords

H.5.3 Group and Organization Interfaces: Computer-supported cooperative work

General Terms

Design

INTRODUCTION

Triggered by the current economic crisis, people have become more conscious of the alternative and sustainable ways of living that can substitute the traditional ones that fail to meet their needs. At the same time, advanced technologies are diffusing into our daily life, thereby democratizing and accelerating innovation. These two phenomena create a favorable condition to design and diffuse social innovation, innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need. One possible role that designers can take part in is to facilitate the on-going transition by creating conditions for people to use creativity and innovate at the local scale.

In the past, series of projects have been conducted at Politecnico di Milano in order to collect the cases of so-called creative communities around the world [1]. Creative communities are groups of people who creatively solve social problems around them rather than complying with existing solutions that fail to meet their needs. They produce what is called collaborative service which is a kind of social service in which the final users *collaborate* to produce solutions to a wide range of social needs that have

failed to be met by existing solutions.

When ICT is applied to collaborative service, it can increase the accessibility and replicability of a service, making it available to the wider social and economical context. It can also enhance communication between the stakeholders of a service and between similar services and reinforce the social network of the participants, thereby strengthening the social fabric and creating an environment for more innovations. For this reason, case studies were conducted to identify the role of ICT in the diffusion of collaborative service.

Case studies consisted of two stages: in the first stage, 30 cases were selected from different parts of the world and analyzed using a ‘light format’. The aim of the light analysis was to obtain basic information – both qualitative and quantitative – of the cases in order to understand and affirm the phenomenon. In the second stage, 10 cases were selected from the 30 cases for the in-depth analysis in order to understand how ICT facilitates the diffusion of collaborative services and influences the social network of collaborative organizations. This part is in progress.

Three findings were obtained: First, the structural system of collaborative service was schematized. Second, based on the primary goals of the services, 7 typologies of collaborative service on the digital platform were derived. Finally, the role of ICT in the diffusion of collaborative service was identified in relation to the dual dimension of collaborative service – solution and social capital.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Joon Sang Baek is a second-year PhD student at Politecnico di Milano. He earned his BA and MA at Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology and worked as a user interface designer at Samsung Mobile. He is interested in how service design can contribute to social innovation and sustainable societies.

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