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Open, But How Much? Growth, Conflict, and Institutional Evolution in Open-Source Communities 1

Juan Mateos-Garcia and W. Edward Steinmueller

in Community, Economic Creativity, and Organization

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If 'open source' is taken as a practice employed in organizing human knowledge-related activities, it may be applied more broadly than just with software. Wherever it is used this chapter contends that processes of negotiation and governance will emerge as means to deal with conflicting interests and visions of community purpose (or epistemic identity). A variety of possible institutional designs for these negotiation and governance processes are possible and each will be tested by the problems of sustaining participation, the growth of the community to include more diverse participants and contests over the paths of development of collective effort. These designs and their subsequent tests are examined empirically for the Debian open source software distribution and Wikipedia open source encyclopaedia creation communities. Conclusions regarding the significance of the initial choice of rules, the processes available to alter these rules, and the potential for dissipation or disruption of efforts are reached, and a proposal to conceive of open source activities as having important parallels to the management of museums rather than bazaars is advanced.

Collaborative Innovation through Swarm Creativity

Peter A. Gloor

in Swarm Creativity: Competitive Advantage through Collaborative Innovation Networks

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This chapter presents the concept of “swarm creativity”, beginning with the concept of swarm intelligence as observed in insects and drawing the parallels between social insects and collaborators in innovation networks. Through examples, how swarm creativity works is explored. The thriving community of Wikipedia (an encyclopedia on the Web) is used to present the key role played by Internet and Web technologies in making swarm creativity something businesses can use to their benefit. The open source software movement provides the example for the specific advantages of swarm creativity in the innovation process. How swarm creativity works in a business environment is illustrated through brief introductions to COINs at Eclipse, Linux, DaimlerChrysler, and Union Bank of Switzerland, which resulted in highly successful and financially lucrative innovations. The bulk of the second half of the chapter explores innovation by collaboration, putting it in an historical context that includes Leonardo da Vinci's network of collaborators and the work of early computer innovators.

The Millian Epistemological Argument for Autonomy Rights

William J. Talbott

in Human Rights and Human Well-Being

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This chapter applies the Millian epistemology to ground a robust, inalienable right to freedom of expression and to ground the other autonomy rights, as necessary for the process of the social process of the free give-and-take of opinion. The chapter considers a variety of exceptions to freedom of expression, including product advertising and political advertising. He uses the examples of Google and Wikipedia to provide empirical confirmation for Mill's claims about the social process of the free give-and-take of opinion. He also shows how the Millian case for freedom of propositional expression can be extended to cover nonpropositional expression in art and literature. The chapter shows that the Millian argument does not limit freedom of expression to reasonable views. The chapter argues that the distinction between reasonable and unreasonable comprehensive views, which plays a large role in Rawls's theory and in contemporary discussions of human rights, cannot support the weight that it is intended to bear. This leads to an extended discussion of intolerant subversive advocacy, in which the chapter argues that neither Habermas's nor Rawls's theory can explain why the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court upholding the Smith Act (which made membership in the Communist Party illegal) in *Dennis v.*

U.S. was erroneous. The chapter also explains why Mill's social process epistemology does not undermine his political philosophy. The author concludes by explaining why the main principle would endorse a human right to freedom of expression.

Having Your Say

NAOMI S. BARON

in *Always On: Language in an Online and Mobile World*

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This chapter looks at blogs, YouTube, and Wikipedia, focusing on how these social media emerged and why they have experienced such meteoric growth. At least part of the answer seems to be that new media are essentially substitutes for earlier outlets of public expression, including newspaper letters to the editor and radio talk shows. Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia with a handful of fundamental "pillars" that define its character and composition. One is that no original research is allowed. Second, writing must be done from a neutral point of view. Wikipedia, YouTube, and blogs all allow freedom of expression and have been predicated upon availability of a computer with an Internet connection. For that matter, the same has been true (at least until recently) of instant messaging and of social networking sites.

Social and cognitive networks

Guido Caldarelli

in *Scale-Free Networks: Complex Webs in Nature and Technology*

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This chapter studies the properties of social and cognitive networks, including collaborative and linguistic networks such as Wikipedia.

The Culture of Connectivity

Jose van Dijck

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This book studies the rise of social media in the first decade of the twenty-first century, up until 2012. It provides both a historical and a critical analysis of the emergence of networking services in the context of a changing ecosystem of connective media. Such history is needed to understand how the intricate constellation of platforms profoundly affects our experience of online sociality. In a short period of time, services like Facebook, YouTube and many others have come to deeply penetrate our daily habits of communication and creative production. While most sites started out as amateur-driven community platforms, half a decade later they have turned into large corporations that do not just facilitate user connectedness, but have become global information and data mining companies extracting and exploiting user connectivity. Offering a dual analytical prism to examine techno-cultural as well as socio-economic aspects of social media, the author dissects five major platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, and Wikipedia. Each of these microsystems occupies a distinct position in the larger ecosystem of connective media, and yet, their underlying mechanisms for coding interfaces, steering users, filtering content, governance and business models rely on shared ideological principles. Reconstructing the premises on which these platforms are built, this study highlights how norms for online interaction and communication gradually changed. “Sharing,” “friending,” “liking,” “following,” “trending,” and “favoriting” have come to denote online practices imbued with specific technological and economic meanings. This process of normalization is part of a larger political and ideological battle over information control in an online world where everything is bound to become “social.”

Common Knowledge?

Dariusz Jemielniak

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This book describes the results of a six-year ethnographic research project on Wikipedia. It explains how Wikipedia's theoretically ahierarchical system may increase Wikipedians' perception of inequality in practice and how hierarchy is enacted through community elections. Although Wikipedia is sometimes portrayed as collaborative and peaceful, it often breaks into conflicts and disputes. The book describes how the gradual increase in editing participation determines its attractiveness, addictiveness, and, ultimately, its level of conflict. The seemingly chaotic organization of cooperation on Wikipedia is actually susceptible to tight control through observation of all behaviors, the participants' structured discourse, and procedures. Nonetheless,

organizational control, so strict in other aspects, is more lenient on Wikipedia than in other types of organizations in terms of credential checks, as a result of a transformation of interpersonal trust and of trust in procedures. The lack of recognition of real-world credentials and formal authority helps sustain the Wikipedia community, by both allowing for alternative authority-building patterns and negating the real-world knowledge structures. The book studies the internal composition of the Wikimedia movement and describes how it is influenced by increasing professionalization. Finally, it reviews the evolution of Jimmy Wales's leadership of Wikipedia and explains how open-collaboration communities require congruence in terms of their organizational leadership model (authoritative or egalitarian) and the exercise of leadership power (direct and interventionist or general and visionary).

Wikipedia in Short

Dariusz Jemielniak

in Common Knowledge?: An Ethnography of Wikipedia

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This chapter gives a short introduction to Wikipedia and the Wikipedia community. After describing the origins and growth of Wikipedia, and providing facts and figures, it examines some of the important rules and behavioral norms used on Wikipedia that determine its social organization. It concludes with a discussion of the informal representation of self among Wikipedians and how they convey those representations to the community through their user pages and actions.

Formal Roles and HierarcHy

Dariusz Jemielniak

in Common Knowledge?: An Ethnography of Wikipedia

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This chapter describes the functioning of the parahierarchy on Wikipedia and the expectations (and their gradual increase) that the community has for its functionaries. It addresses the paradox of why the members of an egalitarian and ahierarchical organization have strong perceptions of inequality in the organization and alienation. Furthermore, it shows

that the quantification of editor input (number of edits) contributes to the increasing bureaucratization of Wikipedia and deters high-quality edits. It links these processes to the fact that the Wikipedia community relies on local power-knowledge differentials as substitutes for formal hierarchies.

Wikipedia and the Neutrality Principle

José van Dijck

in *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media*

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Chapter 7 traces the history of Wikipedia, which started out as a collaborative project in 2001 to grow into a professionally run, volunteer-based, non-profit organization whose goal is the online production of an encyclopedia. Wikipedia is one of the few examples of nonmarket peer-production in an overwhelmingly corporate ecosystem. Over the years, content contribution to Wikipedia has gradually become a protocolled interaction of human editors and bots steered by the platform's hierarchical content management system. A complex procedure of negotiation, based on five basic principles—of which neutrality is the most important one—necessarily results in consensual entries. The neutrality principle is also mirrored in Wikipedia's nonprofit organization: the encyclopedic project is separate from the Wikimedia Foundation that secures its funding and operating power. But can a nonprofit enclave of neutrality exist when it is woven into the corporate fabric of connective media? And how does Wikipedia's neutrality principle relate to the sharing logic and popularity rankings fostered by Facebook and Google?