

Implicit Many-to-One Communication in Online Communities

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Abstract

Recently user-oriented online sharing communities have seen explosive growth (e.g., YouTube and Flickr). Two notable features of these communities set them apart from traditional online message-based communities (e.g. online forums and chat rooms). First, there is no or little “verbal” communication between users. Second, users have much looser connections and no social ties, so that communications are mainly driven by the observation of other users’ activities. The new communication features can be best summarized as a Ballot-box Communication (BBC), an enumerating mechanism that aggregates individual choices, opinion or experience, and in doing so, effectively enabling a new medium to reveal the interests of the mass population. In this paper, we propose, construct, and discuss the new BBC framework. Business issues and potential research directions are also discussed.