

Trust in Electronic Networks of Practice: An Integrative Model

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Abstract

Trust plays an important role in facilitating knowledge sharing, but few studies have systematically investigated trust development in online communities, a popular tool for knowledge sharing. This paper presents one such exploratory study that investigated how knowledge seekers form trust toward knowledge contributors in electronic networks of practice. Knowledge seekers' perceptions of knowledge contributors' ability and benevolence are argued to mediate the trust development formation; and three bases on which perceptions of ability and benevolence are formed – cognition, affection, and situation – were identified. An integrative model was developed and a preliminary test reported with encouraging results. Implications of the findings were also discussed.