HRM-relevant Virtual Community Research: Review and Outlook

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Agenda

1. Virtual Community
2. Literature Review
3. Research Outlook
4. Call for future research
Virtual Community: Definition

- Virtual Communities (VC) are community-oriented, web-based *discussions* of groups of *people* with a certain kind of *common interest* and a certain degree of *social belonging*. (see Gupta/Kim 2004, Rheingold 2000)

- Synonyms (?): social software/media, web 2.0

- core element: communication applications
Virtual Community: Examples
Virtual Community: e-HRM relevance

- VC: socio-economic entities with HRM-relevance
  - Personal needs (social support) → motivation and commitment
  - Business needs (task-oriented) → efficiency

- VC: fit in e-HRM framework (see Strohmeier 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>IT-availability/literacy, individual IT-usage patterns; Virtual Organization/Workplace</th>
<th>?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>HR-experts, employees, applicants</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategies/Activities</td>
<td>Recruitment, development, leadership</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technologies</td>
<td>Internet, Extranet, Intranet; communication / community-supporting applications</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>Costs vs. benefits</td>
<td>?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- VC: State-of-the-Art?
Agenda

- Virtual Community
- Literature Review
- Research Outlook
- Call for future research
# Literature Review: Method

## Period 1995-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Basis</th>
<th>Search Term</th>
<th>No of Hits</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1    | a) EBSCOhost: BSP, Peer-reviewed Academic Journal, References Available, Title or Abstract, Boolean Research Mode  
      b) Screening A-Journals (HRM, HRMJ, IJHRM, JHR)                      | ´Virtual Community´ + ´Human Resource´                                      | 2          |
| 2    | EBSCOhost: BSP, Peer-reviewed Academic Journal, References Available, Title or Abstract, Boolean Research Mode | Additional search-term combinations: communication applications, actors, HR-relevant keyterms, Virtual workplace | 6          |
| 3    | Free Internet Search: Google Scholar; snow ball technique Including proceedings | No specification possible                                                  | 13         |
| 4    | Free Internet Search: Google Scholar; snow ball technique               | No specification possible                                                  | N/A        |
Literature Review: General Results

- $N=21$
- academic journals ($N=18$), conference proceedings ($N=3$)
- Americas ($N=12$), Europe ($N=7$), Asia-Pacific ($N=3$)
- 50% within 2007-2010

- heterogeneous explanation aims
- lacking theoretical foundation
- diverse methods applied
- implications for research and practice proposed
Literature Review: Contextual Discussion

- recruitment
  - recruitment media, eg. virtual worlds (Laumer et al. 2008)
  - potential applicant data collection (Ebner et al. 2009)

- career support
  - intra- and extra-organizational career communities: IT-applications (Ettinger et al. 2008) and typology (Parker et al. 2004)

- development.
  - E-learning (Anderson 1999)
  - intra- (Ardichvili 2008) and extra-organizational (Birchall/Giambona 2007) learning communities

- organizational communication
  - IM (Cho et al. 2005, Quan-Haase et al. 2005, Shaw et al. 2007)
  - weblog (Stocker/Tochtermann 2008)
  - virtual worlds (Kahai et al. 2007)
  - KM: Suggestion Management System (Fairbank et al. 2003)
Literature Review: Contextual Discussion

- **leadership**
  - **policies** (Cortini 2009, Valentine et al. 2010, Warisse Turner et al. 2006)

- **industrial relations**
  - **strike support** (Pliskin/Romm 1997)
  - **power beyond unions** (Taras/Gesser 2003)
Research Outlook:

- though being multidisciplinary: explicate perspectives
  - social
  - IT and design
  - economic

- elaborate definition and characteristics
  - Actors
  - System
  - Transactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Applicants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Belonging</td>
<td>Closely-coupled</td>
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<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Internet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Application</td>
<td>Discussion Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transaction</td>
<td>HR-topic</td>
<td>Function-specific</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transaction Object</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Research Outlook:

- elaborate typology
  - applicant communities
  - HR-to-applicant communities
  - HR communities
  - employee communities
  - HR-to-employee communities

- intensify theory application
  - sociological (social capital, social cognition, social presence, social translucence of technology, evolution)
  - socio - media/ICT - economic (reasoned action, TAM, IS success, uses and gratification, media choice, adaptive structuration, transactions costs, principal agent)

- sort and adapt methods to research object
Agenda

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Call for future research

- reviews on (suggested) synonyms and in identified HRM-areas
- sharpen definition and typology
- scenarios and business models for all types
- IT-trends
- consequences
- ...
Thank you for your attention.

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