Microblogging Practices of Virtual Organizations: Commonalities & Contrasts

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Variety of Microblog Users

- Individuals
  - Outside organizations/
    personal lives
  - Inside organizations

- Collective entities
  - Enterprises
  - Non-profit organizations
  - ...
  - Virtual organizations (VOs):
    work orgs relying
    fundamentally on the Internet
    to operate
Virtual Organizations

- Early adopters of social media
- Less clearly defined org boundaries, greater challenges
How do VOs leverage microblogs for effective operations?

- Microblogging of individuals and other orgs
- Comparative cases: Mozilla & Tapped In
- Discussion
Microblogging of Individuals

Content
(Honeycutt et al., 2009; Java et al., 2007; Naaman et al., 2010; Ramage et al., 2010; Zhao et al., 2009)

- Information sharing
- Activity updates
- Random thoughts
- Interaction

Purposes

- Self-expression
- Information seeking & dissemination
- Work collaboration
- Relationship building
Microblogging of Other Organizations

Content
(Jansen et al., 2009; Lovejoy et al., 2012; Rybalko et al., 2010)

- Information, action, community
- Informational vs. conversational

Purposes
- Promoting brands
- Announcing news
- Supporting customers
- Engaging stakeholders
Cases of VOs

- **Effective** examples of different kinds *(Bos et al., 2007)*

Mozilla: producing open source software

Tapped In*: K-12 educators’ professional development
# Data Overview

*(Until Sep. 22, 2011)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Twitter Account</th>
<th>@firefox</th>
<th>@tappedinorg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Account Creation Date</td>
<td>March 24, 2007</td>
<td>March 19, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Followers</td>
<td>587,926</td>
<td>1,622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Following</td>
<td>339,346</td>
<td>1,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Tweets Retrieved</td>
<td>3,130</td>
<td>3,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted Date of the Oldest Tweet Retrieved</td>
<td>May 15, 2007</td>
<td>December 10, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tweets Mentioned Others</td>
<td>67.73%</td>
<td>12.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retweets</td>
<td>4.54%</td>
<td>78.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retweeted by Others</td>
<td>36.29%</td>
<td>63.05%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qualitative Analysis of Tweets

- Randomly sampled 10% of the tweets retrieved
- Adapted Lovejoy et al.’s coding scheme, 10 categories emerged falling into 3 groups

Mozilla
- Information: 69.53%
- Action: 19.25%
- Community: 11.22%

Tapped In
- Information: 77.81%
- Action: 10.63%
- Community: 11.56%
Common Categories of Tweet Content

- **Filtered information & resources (Information)**
  - Mozilla: 19.17%
  - Tapped In: 77.81%

- **Calls for participation (Action)**
  - Mozilla: 11.18%
  - Tapped In: 11.56%

- **Recognition, appreciation & compliment (Community)**
  - Mozilla: 8.44%
  - Tapped In: 28.75%

- **Responses to questions (Community)**
  - Mozilla: 18.21%
  - Tapped In: 0.31%

- **Response solicitation (Community)**
  - Mozilla: 2.56%
  - Tapped In: 0.31%
Commonalities between Cases

Filtered Information and Resources

Mozilla
Info regarding its own software & organizational news

“Firefox tip: Accidentally close a tab? You can easily get it back by ...”

Tapped In
Info rarely about itself or its members

“RT @[UserID]: More students with disabilities make it to college http://is.gd/jf4k1 Good for all of us!”
Commonalities between Cases

Calls for Participation

Mozilla
Voting, promoting products, etc.

“Did you know you're already a Web Hero? Help your friends upgrade to Firefox 4 today: http://mzl.la/kN9IUB”.

Tapped In
Both own and others’ events

Tapped In: “RT @[UserID]: Soft launch of my new site - please share, subscribe, enjoy and participate http://dailypapert.com - retweet! #laboroflove”.

Commonalities between Cases

- Recognition, Appreciation and Compliment
  - “Thank you” notes & responses to favorable contributions, actions, and words for the org

- Responses to Questions
  - Problems, organizational plans, etc.

- Response Solicitation
  - @firefox: “What's your perfect Firefox moment?”
  - @tappedinorg: “RT @[UserID]: Who has resources to support teacher differentiated learning? Need your help.”
Different Categories of Tweet Content

- Responses to complaints (Community) 15.33%
- Responses to requests (Community) 3.52%
- Value statements (Community) 0.64%
- Acknowledgments of current events (Community) 0.64%
- Reaction sharing (Community) 1.56%

Mozilla Tapped In
Unique Categories of Mozilla

- **Responses to Complaints**
  - Frustration with software

- **Responses to Requests**
  - Features, organizational plans, following, etc.

- **Value Statements**
  - @firefox: “Firefox enables individuals to create and build without permission or restriction.”

- **Acknowledgments of Current Events**
  - @firefox: “Happy Father's Day to all the dad's out there. From @firefox we hope you have a great day!”
Unique Categories of Tapped In

Reactions Sharing

- @[UserID]: “Buzz Lightyear is real! I KNEW it! http://twitpic.com/506rmx”.

- @tappedinorg: “@[UserID] I saw Buzz too! He was at the Downtown Disney Lego store on July 7. Is he doing a world tour?”
Discussion

➢ The Role of Microblogging in VOs’ Effectiveness

• Facilitating recruitment and identity building
  
  *e.g., calls for participation, response solicitation, & value statements*

• Supporting performance evaluation
  
  *e.g., responses to suggestions & responses to complaints*

• Enhancing member support
  
  *e.g., filtered information and resources, responses to questions, recognition, appreciation and compliments, responses to complaints, responses to requests, reactions sharing, & acknowledgements of current events.*
Discussion

Different Microblogging Practices between VOs

- Interaction-oriented vs. Information-oriented
  - Organizational sizes & goals, perceived roles of microblogs

- Internal vs. External information shared

- Organizational identity & heterogeneity

- Visibility of account managers’ identities
Discussion

➢ Comparison with Other Types of Microblogs

• Individual microblogs
  - Similarities: activity updates & information sharing
  - Differences: action, passive interactions & sentiment-related

• Organizational microblogs (Lovejoy et al., 2012)
  - Value statements & reaction sharing
Discussion

➢ Future Work

• More VOs of different sizes and of different types

• Design recommendations of microblogging tools for organizational users
Thanks! Questions?

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This work is supported by National Science Foundation and the Edward M. Frymoyer Endowment. Thanks to Mozilla and Tapped In!