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Ralph Stoeckl

Institute for Information Systems and New Media, Munich School of Business at the Ludwig Maximilians University Munich,
stoeckl@bwl.uni-muenchen.de

Patrick Rohrmeier

Institute for Information Systems and New Media, Munich School of Business at the Ludwig Maximilians University Munich,
rohrmeier@bwl.uni-muenchen.de

Thomas Hess

Institute for Information Systems and New Media, Munich School of Business at the Ludwig Maximilians University Munich,
thess@bwl.lmu.de

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Motivations to produce User Generated Content: differences between webloggers and videobloggers

Ralph Stoeckl, Patrick Rohrmeier, Thomas Hess

Institute for Information Systems and New Media, Munich School of Business at
the Ludwig Maximilians University Munich, Germany

[stoeckl | rohrmeier | thess]@bwl.uni-muenchen.de

Abstract

This explorational study seeks to elucidate the question of what motivates weblogger and videoblogger to produce user generated content. Particular focus was laid on the question whether motivational differences can be discerned between webloggers and video producers and why people do not produce content. The findings show that it is the intrinsic motivations that are responsible for today's user generated content. Video producers and webloggers differ in their motivations. Video production is more associated with fun and time passing than is weblogging. Weblogging is regarded as being more useful in the dissemination of information. The main reasons for not producing content are opportunity costs and privacy issues.

Keywords: *user generated content, motivations, video content, web 2.0*

1 Introduction

User Generated Content (UGC) is „in“. This fact is impressively illustrated by two examples: Youtube and Wikipedia. If one believes the firm's official statement, more than 65.000 videos are placed into Youtube.com every day and receive over 100 million clicks. The online-encyclopaedia Wikipedia presently comprises more than five million articles at any given time written in any language you care to mention. Both sites now rank among the top 20 most used websites in the world.¹

The two examples are representative for a vast and steadily growing number of platforms offering user generated content. The majority of active users are not primarily attracted by monetary incentives as the two examples show: neither Youtube nor Wikipedia offer monetary remuneration. This raises the question

¹ www.alexa.com as of 2006-11-03

what other motivations can explain the popularity of actively creating UGC. The present piece of work addresses this subject by first defining and classifying the meaning of UGC as well as motivation. On this basis the design of the study and its results are presented and discussed. The new knowledge about user motivations can lead to a better understanding of what makes a user driven content platform more attractive and successful. It can furthermore support the design of suitable business models.

It is not exclusively the question of motivation in respect to UGC as such, which we intend to illuminate in this study but, also the extent to which differences in motivation can be discerned between the creation of video and textual contents (weblogging). There are some reasons to examine possible differences. First if there are differences between text- and videoblogging then platform operators should act accordingly to stimulate content growth. That would mean that video platform operators should act in other ways than weblog platform operators. Research results therefore can help to enhance business performance. Second from a science perspective our body of knowledge about weblogging is much bigger than about videoblogging. Our study therefore can help to shed light on not yet examined questions. Third there are some differences between (the production of) video and text. As the production of video needs more technical skills and more equipment we could expect differences in reasons to produce video or text.

2 Basics

The phenomenon of user generated content is too new to allow a profound definition to be given. We therefore use a working definition that rests on three main characteristics:

First, consumers are now the producers. This is the most striking characteristic of user generated content. A customer who used to be traditionally confined to passive consumption now takes on an additional and active role and becomes himself a producer of content (Bowman and Willis 2003). User generated content can therefore be interpreted as a result of the integration of the user into the process of media production. A similar integration of the customer is a phenomenon, which has been observed in other industries for some time. The Lead-User-Approach (von Hippel 1978) or the Open-Source-Approach in software production (Lerner and Tirole 2002) may be cited as examples.

Second, production takes place without immediate profit motivation. A consumer, who has become active, is not guided by the motive of a short term financial success. This characteristic can be ascertained through observation: it is obvious (even empirically authenticated; see below), that most user generated contents are not produced to generate direct profits (Benkler 2006). This characteristic does certainly not preclude the option of a later gratification for contents of outstanding quality or remuneration for contents of extraordinarily high production expenditure.

Third, UGC is mass media orientated content. User generated content is produced for an uncertain number of recipients, which enables us to differentiate between user generated contents and those traces of data left behind wittingly or unwittingly as well as those intended for individual communication e.g. Instant Messaging or Mailings (Schweiger and Quiring 2006). This does not mean,

however, that any self generated contribution is in a position to reach a mass audience. On the contrary, it may be surmised, that a large part of user created content has only very few recipients.

The production of UGC is not the exclusive prerogative of users (as for Wikipedia). Blended forms can be observed, too, where traditional (hierarchically organized) media companies actively integrate users. Take <http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/> in Great Britain. This website is operated by the newspaper firms “Guardian” und “Observer”. The platform bundles editorial content from the two newspapers with much content from bloggers. A second example is www.neon.de in Germany. It is the online branch of the print magazine “neon” from the publishing house Gruner & Jahr. The website content is produced mainly from users. Especially interesting user content is systematically used in the print magazine. www.ohmynews.com in South Korea is an online newspaper that is written by user journalists side by side with staff journalists and is organized by a “normal” publishing house.

The main focus of our study aims at understanding the differences between motivations for users to produce text (weblogging) and video (videoblogging). We should therefore make clear what literature says about motivations. In this regard motivations are intentions of behavior. They arise from the interaction between person, situation and motivational structure of a person (Rosenstiel 2000). Motives in this context is defined as generalized and sustained human behavioral objectives (Steinle 1978), e.g. aspiration for recognition and power or the avoidance of hunger/thirst and so forth. Maslow gives us a well known list of motives (Maslow 1970). Situations and incentives are subject to individual interpretation. Literature differentiates between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci 1971), (Frey and Osterloh 2002), (Rosenstiel 2000), (Zimbardo 1995). As Deci puts it: “One is said to be intrinsically motivated to perform an activity when one receives no apparent reward except the activity itself” (Deci 1971). If a person were to decide for an action exclusively because of its consequences, we would be speaking of extrinsic motivation (Zimbardo 1995). Measured behavioural intentions need not be exactly congruent. The extent to which a person actually shows certain behaviour is not only dependent on his intentions but also on other factors, like costs connected with the behaviour.

The study of motivations of user generated content is not completely new. For one thing, there have been quantitative and qualitative studies specifically for user generated contents. On the other hand there are studies casting light on motivation in producing content for online communities. Because UGC can also be interpreted as the results of online communities, scientific findings in that domain are relevant as well. Table 1 gives a summary of relevant research results.

Author, Year	Area of Research, Sample, Methodology	Research results: Most important identified user motives
User Generated Content		
(Bowman and Willis 2003)	Participatory Journalism Qualitative description of possible motives	To gain status or build reputation in a given community To create connections with others who have similar interests Sense-making and understanding (Community building) To inform and be informed

Author, Year	Area of Research, Sample, Methodology	Research results: Most important identified user motives
(Nardi et al. 2004)	Weblogs 23 participants Interviews, text- and quantitative analysis of blog posts	To entertain and be entertained To create Documentation of life (social contact to family and friends) Express own opinion and comments (influence others) Express feelings and emotion Thinking by writing Build a community
(Lenhart and Fox 2006)	Webloggers 233 self-identified webloggers telephone interviews	Express yourself creatively (52%*) To document your personal experiences or share them with others (50%) To stay in touch with friends and family (37%) To share practical knowledge or skills with others (34%) To motivate other people to action (29%) * (% of participants who identified the motive as a major reason for blogging)
(Schmidt and Wilber 2005)	Weblogs 5.246 participants Online-questionnaire	Fun (70,8%*) Writing itself (62,7%) Archive experiences and ideas for oneself (61,7%) Exchange experiences and ideas with others (49,0%) Express own feelings (44,5%) * (% of participants who identified the motive as a reason for blogging)
(Trammell et al. 2006)	Motivation of polish webloggers 358 polish weblogs Quantitative content-analysis	Self-Expression (80,3%*) Entertainment (52,6%) Social Interaction (51,3%) Passing Time (23,7%) Information (7,9%) Professional Advancement (2,6%) * (% of weblogs containing the motive)
Online Communities		
(Butler et al. 2002)	Community building work 385 participants Questionnaire	Order of importance of benefits for active participants: 1. Social, 2. Information, 3. Altruistic, 4. Visibility Order of importance of benefits for silent participants: 1. Information, 2. Social, 3. Visibility, 4. Altruistic Order of importance of benefits for owners: 1. Altruistic, 2. Social, 3. Visibility, 4. Information
(McLure Wasko and Faraj 2000)	Motivation to participate in e-communities 342 participants Questionnaire (open questions), content analysis	Useful – information valuable (14,6%*) Reciprocity (13,4%) Learn (13,4%) Peer Group (11,6%) Altruism/pro-social behaviour (9,8%) Enjoyment/entertaining (6,5%) * (% of all mentioned and categorized reasons)
(Ridings and Geffen 2004)	Motivation to join virtual communities 399 participants Open questions in communities	Information Exchange (49,8%) Friendship (24,0%) Exchange of social support (10,9%) Recovery (8,7%) Technical reasons (1,7%) General interest (1,7%) * (% of all mentioned and categorized reasons)
(Stöckl et al. 2006)	Ciao.com (community that rates and reviews products) 421 participants, Online-questionnaire	Communication with other members (0.52*) Building up identity (0.395) Mutuality (0.317) Monetary compensation (0.130) * (Correlation with variable “amount of produced

Author, Year	Area of Research, Sample, Methodology	Research results: Most important identified user motives
(Wang and Fesenmaier 2003)	Contributions in online communities (travel community) 322 participants Questionnaire	Sharing enjoyment (3,65*) Gaining a sense of helpfulness to others (3,54) Seeking/Providing advice (3,49) Satisfying other members' needs (3,36) Finding friends/peers (3,08) * (means: rated on a 5-point scale: 1=not important; 5=very important)

Table 1: Synopsis of motivation research of the last few years

In regard to the studies about UGC in table 1 (and with some caution in comparing them due to the research methods) there are three motivations that are often mentioned as reasons to produce user generated content: documentation, fun/entertainment and the expression of oneself. Table 1 shows further that the majority of studies about UGC concentrate on the motivation in connection with maintenance of weblogs. The study in hand explicitly takes into consideration those motivations, which play a role in user produced video-contents as well as weblogging. This enables us to look into possible differences in motivation between video producers and bloggers. As for online communities (see Table 1), the exchange of (useful) information and advice is one of the top reasons to join/stay in an online community. Social aspects (friendship, reciprocity, social support) were important as well.

In addition, there are many studies about motivations in open source development, see for example (Gosh and Prakash 2000), (Hars and Ou 2002), (Hertel et al. 2003), (Hippel and Lakhani 2003), (Lakhani and Wolf 2005). Top motivations there were the improving of programming skills and reciprocity (“I was helped, so I help”). One study (Hars and Ou 2002) showed that reputation had some motivational effects. (Hertel et al. 2003) speaks of hedonistic motives, pragmatic motives, social motives and general identification within the group that had the greatest effects.

3 Design of study

We used the uses and gratifications approach as our theoretical fundament. This method is commonly used in internet studies, see for example (Sangwan 2005), (Papacharissi and Rubin 2000) or (Kaye and Johnson 2002). The approach assumes people using media actively and goal orientated and according to their needs (Katz and Blumler 1974). This implicitly means that people know their needs and can articulate them. The uses and gratifications approach is seen to be appropriate for studying the motivations of people using media (Lin 1996). To complement the perspective given through the uses and gratifications approach, we used concepts common in economic theory, namely the consideration of monetary and signalling incentives and the provision for costs (especially opportunity costs) (Lerner and Tirole 2002). The consideration of monetary rewards is useful to test part of our provisional working definition of UGC (“no immediate profit motivation”).

An online-questionnaire was used as basis for data gathering, which could be downloaded in an English and a German version. This means of data gathering has been found useful in a number of studies concerning user motivation (Lakhani and Wolf 2005), (Hars and Ou 2002), (Hippel and Lakhani 2003). The questionnaire was first pretested with 15 students to verify clarity and intelligibility. The questionnaire was online from August, 21 to September, 4 2006.

It was targeted on three different groups: persons not producing user generated content, video-producers and bloggers. In order to generate attention to our online-questionnaire we got into direct contact with potential participants via e-mail. We gathered the e-mail addresses by browsing known UGC platforms and forums. In addition to that, we asked UGC-platform providers to incorporate a link into their home-pages linking it with our online-questionnaire. The chosen procedure for recruitment has the disadvantage not to be statistically representative (Ruggiero 2000). It is therefore an explorational study.

A total of 792 persons opened the questionnaire. 489 questionnaires went into evaluation (61,7%). 157 persons chose the English alternative of the questionnaire (32%), 332 persons the German alternative (68%). There were 223 persons among the participants who did not produce UGC, 132 persons did maintenance for a weblog and 134 persons were video-producers. Table 2 summarizes the demographic data.

The majority of interviewed bloggers and video producers were putting contents into the internet for less than 6 months. After all 11% of video producers and 13% of bloggers pursued their particular form of content publication for more than two years. Clearly the frequency of contributions for videos was lower on average than for weblogs. Table 3 provides a summary of events.

Our model comprises eight motivations, commonly used in the uses and gratifications approach and open source research. The constructs diversion, pleasure, distribution of information, self-presentation and contacts were used in accordance with (Papacharissi and Rubin 2002). The variables monetary incentive and signalling-incentive follow the study by (Lerner and Tirole 2002). "Documentation" derives from the work of (Nardi et al. 2004). Each of the eight motivations has been represented by three items. We used a scale of seven steps, coding the extremes "disagree completely" with a 1 and "agree completely" with a 7.

Demographics	Total	Lurkers	Webloggers	Video Producers
Language	489	223	132	134
German	332	195	94	43
English	157	28	38	91
Gender	477	218	128	131
female	177	79	61	37
male	300	139	67	94
Age	483	221	129	133
11-15	23	1	10	12
16-20	74	1	28	45
21-25	173	106	36	31
26-30	122	77	19	26
31-35	40	19	10	11
36-40	19	8	7	4
41-45	11	5	5	1
>45	21	4	14	3
Country	485	223	129	133
Germany / Austria / Switzerland	331	196	92	43
England / USA	89	6	18	65
Other	65	21	19	25
Occupation	484	223	128	133
Student / Draftee	240	105	62	73
Employee / Clerk	160	103	37	20
Freelancer	41	12	13	16
Retired / Pensioner	4	0	3	1
Unemployed	17	1	6	10
Other	22	2	7	13

Table 2: Sample demographics

	Video	Weblog
<i>How long have you been publishing videos on the Internet / maintaining your weblog?</i>		
	134 (100%)	132 (100%)
3 months or less	53 (40)	51 (39)
3-6 month	33 (25)	22 (17)
6-12 month	19 (14)	22 (17)
1-2 years	15 (11)	20 (15)
2-3 years	5 (4)	9 (7)
more than 3 years	9 (7)	8 (6)
<i>Altogether, how many videos / blog entries have you already published?</i>		
	134 (100%)	132 (100%)
5 videos or less	38 (28)	
6-10 videos	25 (19)	
11-20 videos	27 (20)	
21-30 videos	20 (15)	
31-40 videos	6 (4)	
41-50 videos	3 (2)	
more than 50 videos	15 (11)	
		61 (46)
20 blog entries or less		23 (17)
21-40 blog entries		11 (8)
41-60 blog entries		7 (5)
61-80 blog entries		1 (1)
81-100 blog entries		29 (22)
more than 100 blog entries		
<i>How frequently do you put videos on the Internet / update the material on your weblog?</i>		
	134 (100)	131 (100%)
less than once a month	41 (31)	15 (11)
1-3 times a month	49 (37)	35 (27)
1-3 times a week	34 (25)	44 (34)
4-7 times a week	10 (7)	22 (17)
several times a day	0 (0)	15 (11)
<i>On average, how many hours per week do you spend producing and publishing videos / blogging?</i>		
	134 (100%)	130 (100%)
1 hour per week or less	57 (43)	41 (32)
1-2 hours per week	19 (14)	33 (25)
3-4 hours per week	21 (16)	36 (28)
5-6 hours per week	10 (7)	6 (5)
7-8 hours per week	9 (7)	7 (5)
9-10 hours per week	3 (2)	2 (2)
more than 10 hours per week	15 (11)	5 (4)

Table 3: Overview of sample production activity

4 Results

With the help of an explorational factor analysis the items of the questionnaire could be condensed into six motivational factors (see Table 4). The construct „monetary incentives“ and „signal incentives“ were condensed into one factor and also the motives “self-presentation” and “documentation”. In order to investigate motivational differences between the production of video- as well as textual contents we compared the mean factor values. In order to investigate the sort of influence which different motivations have on the frequency and expenditure of time of content production we carried out a multiple linear regression. It became clear from the quality of the regression model (adjusted R² 0.39) as well as individual beta-values that a prognosis of the expenditure of time necessary for UGC production on the basis of motivational factors is not appropriate.

Factors/Items	Values	Means	Std.Dev.
Factor 1: External economic incentives		2.58	1.26
because it is very profitable for me.	0.760	2.04	1.66
because I am paid for it.	0.757	1.55	1.43
because I receive some form of compensation.	0.748	1.80	1.56
to open up new job opportunities.	0.709	2.89	2.10
to enhance my reputation.	0.664	3.40	2.03
Cronbach's Alpha / Eigenwert/ Variance explained	0.79	4.33	19.68
Factor 2: Personal documentation		3.95	1.54
to document my life.	0.830	3.47	2.09
to provide personal information about myself.	0.790	3.29	1.97
to tell others about myself.	0.730	4.17	1.93
to archive my experiences and ideas.	0.712	4.66	1.94
to keep a record of my experiences.	0.703	4.21	1.99
Cronbach's Alpha / Eigenwert/ Variance explained	0.83	3.21	14.57
Factor 3: Enjoyment		5.65	1.42
because I enjoy it.	0.862	5.75	1.53
because it is fun.	0.819	5.67	1.72
because it is entertaining.	0.746	5.52	1.60
Cronbach's Alpha / Eigenwert/ Variance explained	0.85	3.06	13.89
Factor 4: Passing time		3.27	1.82
because it passes the time away when bored.	0.886	3.40	2.07
when I have nothing better to do.	0.875	3.33	2.02
to occupy my time.	0.826	3.06	2.00
Cronbach's Alpha / Eigenwert/ Variance explained	0.88	2.45	11.15
Factor 5: Information dissemination		4.37	1.67
to share information that may be of use to others.	0.868	4.23	2.08

Factors/Items	Values	Means	Std.Dev.
to provide information.	0.821	4.38	1.95
to present information on my special interest.	0.634	4.55	1.97
Cronbach's Alpha / Eigenwert/ Variance explained	0.78	1.34	6.11
Factor 6: Contact		4.37	1.70
to communicate with others.	0.786	4.52	1.90
to keep in touch with others.	0.709	4.23	1.94
Cronbach's Alpha / Eigenwert/ Variance explained	0.72	1.10	5.00

Table 4: Results of factor analysis. Extraction method: principle component analysis; Rotation method: Varimax; Kaiser-Criterium (Eigenwert of Factors > 1); exclude cases pairwise. Factor loadings below 0,4 are not displayed. Means: 1="strongly disagree"; 7="strongly agree".

A glance at the mean factor values (second row from the right, Table 4) shows that the constructs enjoyment, information dissemination and contact are the most relevant motivations. Motivationally the least relevant factor is „external economical incentives“. If, however we consider the mean item values behind the factor, we get a more differentiated picture as regards economical incentives. While economical incentives in monetary form can be graded as motivationally negligible, the production of user generated contents expresses the wish to gain reputation and recognition from other users.

Apart from the active content producer we were particularly interested to learn why users do not produce contents. It is remarkable in this context that our questionnaire was answered by as many “non-producers” as producers of UGC. As these recipients only read user generated content we shall call them “lurkers” in accordance to (Preece et al. 2004).

In table 5 we see the motivations / de-motivations to produce and not to produce user generated content.

	Motivations	De-motivations
Enjoyment	5.65	
Info dissemination	4.37	
Contact	4.37	
Pers. Documentation	3.95	
Too time consuming		5.75
No storage of personal experiences		4.82
Privacy concerns		4.57
No fun		4.31
No interesting information		4.27

Table 5: Motivations, De-Motivations to produce UGC. Mean values >3.5.

As our scale range is 1 to 7, a value above 3.5 can be interpreted as approval. Thus we can identify four reasons that act as motivations and five arguments that act as demotivations regarding the production of UGC (see Table 5).

In order to locate differences in motivations we used an independent sample t-test2 to test for differences between web- and video-producers (Table 6) and a t-test for paired samples to investigate differences between weblog and video lurkers (Table 7).

In regard of production of text- or video content five of the six factors showed significant differences in mean values. Especially the factors enjoyment, passing time and information dissemination showed relatively high differences (differences of 0.68/0.7/0.7 in response grade)

A comparison of mean values concerning the reasons for non-production of textual and video-contents show significant differences only at three variables (see Table 7): the time consuming argument (0.34 response grade), the missing of interesting information argument (1.17) and the technical restriction argument (0.6). Within the scope of video-contents a lack of sufficiently interesting contents was considered to be the main obstacle. Moreover technical limitations were quoted more prominently as obstacle where video-content was concerned.

Factor	Weblog/Video	N	Mean	SD	t-test
Enjoyment	Weblog	131	5.31	1.44	t=-3.99**
	Video	133	5.99	1.31	
Info. dissemination	Weblog	127	4.72	1.53	t=3.37**
	Video	126	4.02	1.74	
Pers. Documentation	Weblog	126	4.17	1.52	t=2.36*
	Video	128	3.73	1.52	
Passing time	Weblog	128	2.92	1.62	t=-3.14**
	Video	131	3.62	1.94	
Ext. economic incentives	Weblog	129	2.34	1.18	t=-3.99***
	Video	130	2.81	1.29	
Contact	Weblog	132	4.42	1.67	n.s.
	Video	132	4.31	1.73	

Table 6: Motivations to produce text vs. video. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; n.s. = not significant. Means: 1 = "strongly disagree"; 7 = "strongly agree"

Argument, Weblog/Video	N	Mean	SD	t-test
Because is is to time consuming				t=2.77**

2 T-tests postulate normal distribution of the underlying variable but are robust against variations in this respect

Argument, Weblog/Video	N	Mean	SD	t-test
	Weblog 204	5.92	1.46	
	Video 204	5.58	1.74	
Because I cannot provide interesting information / videos				t=-7.52***
	Weblog 199	3.68	1.94	
	Video 199	4.85	2.04	
Because I'm exposed to technical restrictions				t=-5.52***
	Weblog 210	1.66	1.5	
	Video 210	2.26	2	
Because I don't want my personal experiences being stored on the internet				n.s.
	Weblog 206	4.9	2.03	
	Video 206	4.73	2.16	
Because I think it would affect my privacy				n.s.
	Weblog 208	4.46	2.04	
	Video 208	4.68	2.09	
Because I think it is no fun				n.s.
	Weblog 196	4.36	1.94	
	Video 196	4.27	2.05	
Because I think that no one would read my contributions / watch my videos				n.s.
	Weblog 201	3.56	1.82	
	Video 201	3.41	1.87	
Because I don't want to be part of an Internet community				n.s.
	Weblog 203	3.41	1.96	
	Video 203	3.42	2.02	
Because I think I could not earn money with it				n.s.
	Weblog 183	3.22	2.1	
	Video 183	3.22	2.11	
Because I don't know how it works				n.s.
	Weblog 211	3.13	2.33	
	Video 211	2.92	2.22	

Table 7: Motivations *not* to produce text vs. video. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; n.s.=not significant. Means: 1="strongly disagree"; 7="strongly agree"

5 Discussion and Conclusion

Enjoyment, distribution of information, personal documentation and the desire for contacts are the motivation factors driving the persons interviewed to the production of user generated contents. All constructs describe intrinsic motivations, where the activity in itself is part of the aspired satisfaction. In contrast to that extrinsic motivations played an inferior role – it was above all monetary incentives which proved negligible among the persons interviewed. This finding supports our working definition for the moment. Despite today's inferior role of monetary incentives these must not be mistaken for not being effective in general. The relative unimportance of extrinsic motivations was only to be expected due to the basis of measurement. To test for the relationship between monetary incentives and UCG production we would need platforms that offer substantial monetary remunerations - but there are currently very few platforms

doing that. An empirical study of a UGC-Platform offering monetary remuneration (Stöckl et al. 2006) did point to a statistical effect between the production of user generated contents and monetary remuneration, however this correlation was considerably less than e.g. the correlation between the ambition of setting up an identity or the desire for contacts and the production of contents. The platform examined in the study mentioned, www.ciao.com (portal for product appraisal) remunerates product appraisals against certain parameters (how numerous are existing reviews of a product, who writes the reviews etc.). Potential proceeds remain however relatively slender thus lending themselves little for a test of their influence as incentives for content production. The range of user generated contents shows – quite independently of that – that intrinsic motivations act so stimulating on a sufficient number of persons, that there is no shortage of supply.

A comparison of our findings with the results of table 1 is not easily possible because of fundamental methodical differences. One thing however becomes clear across the board: intrinsic motivations are responsible for today's range of UGC. Extrinsic and especially monetary incentives are not (yet) playing any role. The relative importance of motivational factors differs between the studies. As the information factor was an important reason to publish content in this study it was for example relatively unimportant in the study of (Trammell et al. 2006). The same is true for example in regard to the documentation factor: this was an important factor in (Lenhart and Fox 2006) but to a lower extent in this study and more instances could be found. The studies therefore make transparent the range of factors that matters in the current state of user generated content production.

The answers of UGC-objectors (lurkers) permit three statements in particular. Two important reasons for not producing contents are on the one hand the opportunity costs of time, and on the other hand reservations concerning the protection of privacy. The argument to be in no position of offering interesting information was particularly relevant as regards video contents, less so with textual information. Lurkers represented – in this context – the group of highest age-range (100% of objectors were 21 years or older, text producers 63%, Video producers 57%) and can imagine more attractive options for their (probably scant) leisure time than the production of user generated contents. Opportunity costs therefore present the biggest cost-pool for the decision for or against one's own UGC-production.

There are differences in motivations between bloggers and video-producers. Video production is more associated with fun and time passing than is blogging. Blogging is regarded as being more useful in the dissemination of information. These findings support what one could have expected. Because the production of video content needs more technical equipment and is more time consuming than the production of text it is no wonder that our study shows exactly that it is these variables where differences between bloggers and video-producers are biggest.

Based on our findings UGC platform operators should concentrate their efforts on strengthening the fun, contact and information dissemination capabilities of their platforms without forgetting privacy issues. Enhancing information dissemination/contact capabilities while keeping private data unscathed at the same time seems to be a conflicting idea. That is not necessarily the case as best practice examples

show. Look for example at xing.com, a successful business contact site. There every member has full control over their personal data and can set in detail who can see/do what with one's personal information. A reasonable privacy policy may lower the entry barrier for now-lurkers while not affecting these users that do not bother about publishing personal information. Due to technical standards like RSS or permalinks the information dissemination capabilities even of today's weblog platforms look impressive. A need for action is probably not acute here. At the same time there is no panacea in finding ways to enhance the fun factor of UGC-sites, so platform operators will have to experiment. While operators can address the privacy issue they have much less influence on the biggest obstacles for lurkers to become contributors: opportunity costs. Lowering technical shortcomings will have some effect but the much bigger factor – the alternatives in using one's time – lies out of reach. Starting points to address this could lie in systematically stressing the benefit aspects of UGC. For example platform operators could develop functions that support the building of non-monetary signals (like reputation and recognition) – but that is not easy.

So, the equation weighing economical costs against profits contains, on the profits-side, at present, almost exclusively intrinsic motivations. On the side of the costs, we have the opportunity costs relevant to a decision. The future will bring new elements on either side of the equation. Further developments will take care that any lack of experience („because I don't know how it works“) as an obstacle to producing user content, will continually diminish. This will also reduce opportunity costs because the same UGC will be produced quicker than before. Better (easier to operate) technology will reduce opportunity costs as well. On the profits-side it is likely that extrinsic motivations will accumulate. Prestige as well as recognition are two factors in this process which even now indicate some of their behavioural potential. Both are social constructs. To activate them may not be as easy as setting monetary incentives. All this will promote further UGC growth. But the success of UGC will not depend exclusively on the sheer bulk of UGC produced, but also on the quality of the produced contents. There is a number of open questions left here, making for an interesting future.

6 Limitations

There are some limitations to our study that should be addressed in future studies if the presented research questions are worthwhile. First as we had used a not representative sample we could not make profound generalizations. Thus the next step could be the collection of more systematic (representative) gathered sample data. Second our study concentrates on an overall examination of motivational differences. We did not study differences between the top productive users and the rest because sub sample size of top productive users was too small. Such an analysis could yield some interesting results. This could also be addressed by a more systematic data gathering process.

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