

Collaboration in Action: Enabling Innovative Scholarship with Social and Crowdsourcing Services

Chirag Shah
Rutgers University
chirags@rutgers.edu

Daqing He
University of Pittsburgh
Dah44@pitt.edu

Marie L. Radford
Rutgers University
mradford@rutgers.edu

Jung Sun Oh
University of Pittsburgh
jsoh@pitt.edu

Lynn Silipigni Connaway
OCLC
connawal@oclc.org

Abstract

With an exponentially growing set of e-services and social networks that allow people to be not only consumers, but also producers of information, information seeking and sharing behaviors are rapidly changing. Innovations in areas such as information exchange and knowledge management are coming from scholarship in data sciences, and the “wisdom of the crowd” has become more than a passing trend. The focus of this event would be to discuss the latest developments in the field of social media and crowdsourcing specific to information seeking, knowledge management, and innovative methods for collaborative question-answering. Specifically, the event will facilitate discussions about and engage the audience in topics such as social search, community-based question-answering, and hybrid models for information seeking. These discussions will be guided by the organizers who come from a variety of backgrounds, institutions, and research areas.

Keywords: information seeking behavior, crowdsourcing, social media, social Q&A (SQA), virtual reference (VR)

Purpose and Intended Audience

This event is designed for an audience of researchers, faculty, Ph.D. students, practitioners, and members of the information industry. It is intended to bring researchers in the fields of social and collaborative information seeking, crowdsourcing, social media, as well as virtual reference (VR) and Social Question & Answer (SQA) services together to discuss their recent research findings and to set a course and agenda for future work. Thus, primary objectives are to:

- Share our expertise and research findings
- Discuss limitations and possibilities for future synergies
- Identify ways to share data and other resources
- Suggest and plan possible collaborations

Particularly, the discussion during this event will be approached from different angles - How does community participation affect information-seeking behaviors? What happens when search goes social? What could social search and VR services learn from each other to better serve users?

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Event Agenda, Ramp-up (development), and Follow-through

Unlike many traditional panels, this event is intended to be highly interactive, with a clear emphasis on audience participation. For instance, after making a few short presentations (30-45 minutes), the organizers will present specific topics and/or research questions to initiate conversations with the attendees. Examples include:

- How are information-seeking and sharing behaviors changing and shaping the new landscape of information sciences and practices? Think about examples and narratives.
- What is social search? How does it inform “traditional” searching behaviors and models, and what challenges and opportunities may be ahead?
- How do we compare expert-based (e.g., VR) with crowd-based (e.g., SQA) services? What ideas, components and practices can each learn from one another?

Finally, the organizers will encourage discussions that lead to planning for future research and potential collaborations.

Before the event (and the conference), the organizers will set up a website to facilitate organization of themes and research questions among the organizers. This website also will be open to others, serving as an important tool to ramp-up the pre-event discussions.

During and after the event, the organizers will setup a blog and/or a wiki to facilitate discussion and planning. The organizers also will create a hash-tag on Twitter for participants (both on and off site) to share their comments and engage in discussions easily.

After the event, the blog and/or the wiki pages will be kept alive, allowing researchers to share their data and findings, and continue connecting with each other for discussions and collaborations.

Relevance to the Conference and Significance to the Field

The focus of this event fits nicely with the conference's theme "Scholarship in Action: Data, Innovation, Wisdom." Given both the vast research opportunities and the nontrivial challenges the large-scale social data present to the iSchool community, we believe that it is critical for researchers and practitioners with shared interests to learn from one another, share innovative approaches, and eventually develop collective wisdom. This event will serve as an initial step towards this goal. The research findings and discussions shared through the event and the post-event activities will encourage exploration for the creation of new technological and conceptual configurations, such as possibilities for collaboration and data exchange of social, crowdsourcing, and one-on-one VRS. As the majority of the audience conducts research or engages in practice in information sciences or services, they will find the focus relevant and informative with regard to their academic interests and responsibilities.

The format of this event is highly social and interactive. It provides first-hand experience for both the organizers and audience to work on social data, on information sharing, and on community building and collaboration.