Modes of user-collaboration with and without firms

A framework for new forms of innovation and production on the Web

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The phenomenon:

New forms of user collaboration emerge on a large scale

Web enables increasingly new contributions of users on a large scale

Broad base of user-knowledge types of content, not available before

User are heavily interested on new types of content by other users

Without firms and with firms:

Wikipedia and Open Source Software;
facebook, youtube and other user-generated media;
Crytec and spreadshirt;
tripadvisor and other recommender-services, user-support-forums

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What mechanisms enable user-collaboration on a large scale?

(How) do firms adapt those mechanisms?

Tapscott 2006, Benkler 2002 and 2006, Weber 2004, von Hippel 2005, O'Mahony and West

Characteristics of user collaboration

1. Autonomy of users or contributors
2. Collective action of users to produce services in a joint effort
3. Collective self-organization of user collaboration on a large scale

Benkler 2002 and 2006, O'Mahony 2006, 2007, Gläser 2007, Stegbauer 2009/2011, Piller et al 2006, 2009, 2011, Ostrom 1990, Wittke/Hanekop 2011

1. Autonomy of users or contributors

- voluntary contributions
- users free to decide what to contribute
- realize user's own interests, experience, knowledge, needs, motives, point or view

(How) can firms respect the autonomy of contributors?

- give users leeway to decide what to contribute
- provide tasks that fit to user‘s motives
- abstain from selection and control of user‘s contributions

Lakhani and Wolf 2005, Ghosh and Glott 2002 and 2010, von Hippel 2005,

1. Autonomy of users or contributors

How do firms respect the autonomy of contributors?

- give users leeway to decide what to contribute

Varying degrees of autonomy:

- youtube, user-generated-content: high;

content is completely produced by autonomous actors; firm is platform-provider, not content-provider

- tripadvisor, : low

users contributions reduced to specific or standardized tasks; firm moderate service

2. Collective action of users

•users make contributions for other users
•contributions are freely accessible on the Web
•a large number of contributors and users

Specific collective action problems has to solved
•reciprocity without obligations
•„critical mass“ problem
•large number of users and potential contributors

Ostrom, 1990, Benkler 2002,2006, Pentzold 2010, Wiesenthal 2006,

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2. Collective action of users to produce services in a joint effort

How firms enable collective action of users on a large scale?

- openness for users and contributors
- making contributions should be fun and easy to do
- shared goals and interesting subjects
- demonstrate the platform's ability to attract many contributions
- community building

3. Collective self-organization of user collaboration on a large scale

- openness and transparency
- institutionalized rules for contributions
- implemented in it-based collaboration tools

Wittke/Hanekop 2011, Ostrom 1990, Benkler 2002 and 2006, Gläser 2007, Pentzold 2010, Reagle 2010,

3. Collective self-organization of user collaboration on a large scale

- openness and transparency
- institutionalized rules for contributions
- implemented in it-based collaboration tools

How firms enable collective self-organization of users?

- provide tools to make activities transparent – both of users and of the firm's staff
- implement rules, are accepted within the community; has to be followed by users as well as by the firm

Ostrom 1990, Benkler 2002 and 2006, Gläser 2007, Pentzold 2010, Reagle 2010,

Conclusion

(How) do firms adapt these mechanisms of user collaboration?

Characteristics of user collaborations are applied by firms

- to a part of the firm's activity and
- to a certain degree

Fragmentation of realms

- one realm with the firm's conventional coordination
- another realm in which users collaborate

von Hippel and von Krogh 2006; Lessing, L. 2008, Harhoff and Mayrhofer 2010

Fragmentation of realms

Realm with user collaboration is characterized by:

- voluntary contributions of users for users
- on a large scale (with a broad base of users and co-producers)
- publicly available on the web (public good, not a commodity of the firm)
- autonomy of contributors and contributions
- collective self-organisation, that relies on openness, transparency and collective rules
- general rules and IT-based tools, that pertain not only for users but also for the firm

Wittke/Hanekop 2011

Thank you!

Questions and comments?

Firm driven collaborative innovations – the challenge of hybrid governance

- Firms provide service/development platforms
- Therefore: collaborative innovation in an commercial environment
- However: Firms have to respect the specifics of collaborative communities
  - shared goals, norms and institutionalized rules of the community
  - dynamic social structure based on contributions
  - membership by voluntary contributions
  - large base of possible contributors (openness)