A Farm in Every Window: A Study into the Incentives for Participation in the Window Farm Virtual Community

Dominic DiFranzo
Alvaro Graves
Outline

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• Incentive/Participation Models
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Introduction

• Many virtual communities fail or die off due to users not participating.
• Need better understanding on the motivations and incentives on contributing to virtual communities.
• No unifying model or consensus on incentives or incentivization in virtual communities and this makes studying them very difficult.
Our study looked into the incentive structures for members of the Window Farm virtual community.

- Look and tie different models & methodologies from different disciplines
- Propose a methodology to tie motivations reported by users to the activity they express in the community
Window Farm
Window Farm Community

- Multi-blogging platform
- R&D-I-Y (research and develop it yourself)
- 20,000 registered users
- 2,000 visiting users in a month
- 45-60 activity contributors in a month
- About 10 users are responsible for over 80% of the content in a month
Methodology

- Used models and methodology from different disciplines (see paper for more)
- Two parts (survey & classification and analysis of the behavior in the community)
- Tied results from survey to classification of behavior for particular users
• Survey
  – 48 Responses
  – Asked questions about Motivations for different behavior and actions
  – Also asked questions on sense of community and activity levels

• Behavior classification
  – (Question, Answer, Sharing, Social)
  – Done by hand
Results

- **Overall Motivations**
  - Self satisfaction and self-improvement
  - Learning new skills
- **Answering and Sharing** had two similar Motivations (Fun to do, Obligation to community)
- **Answering** had a different motivation (Ideology)
- **Sharing** differed also (Getting feedback on ideas)
Results

- Neither the Fun or Obligation to community motivation were positively correlated with answering questions or sharing ideas.
- Ideology was positively correlated to answering questions.
- Getting feedback on ideas was correlated to sharing ideas.
Future Work

• These motivations tie well with Open Source communities (best practices?)
• Connect models better to develop better unified understanding of motivation
• Run experiments to test models and features in communities.
• Develop better methodology and methods to explore this topic
Questions?

• Thanks to Britta Riley and Window Farm Team

• Send questions to difrad@rpi.edu

• Twitter: @difrad