

ROBUST Annual Report



<http://robust-project.eu/>

Online communities generate major economic value and form pivotal parts of corporate expertise management, marketing, product support, CRM, product innovation and advertising. Communities can exceed millions of users and infrastructures must support hundreds of millions discussion threads that link together billions of posts. ROBUST is targeted at developing methods to understand and manage the business, social and economic objectives of the users, providers and hosts and to meet the challenges of scale and growth in large communities.

Summary of Activities

After a successful project kick-off, the main task in the first two months was to develop a methodology to collect requirements from community owners and hosts, as well as community members and users. The requirements and data will form guidelines for the aims for the first year and imply the portfolio of tools to develop in the project. In parallel the use case partners initiated the collection, documentation, compilation and anonymization of social network information and content data from the community platforms which will be used in the scope of ROBUST.

Collection of Requirements

The needs and requirements of community owners as well as community users define to a large extent the practical aims of ROBUST. Therefore, collecting these requirements provides valuable information to set the focus for methods and tools to be developed in the course of the project. This collection will be realised on the basis of questionnaires with different foci on the side of the users, the aims and thereby risks and opportunities for the community owners as well as policy models implemented in online communities. In close cooperation with the use case partners the questionnaires have been iteratively refined and have reached a state ready for deployment to stakeholders and key users.

Collection and Provision of Community Data

The early on availability of community data is one asset of ROBUST. With the start of the project, the use case partners have initialized the collection of data from the communities they host or observe. Besides the collection and provision of the data, this comprises the description of the data model and distribution format, as well as taking steps necessary to anonymize the data in order to respect the user's privacy.

Data from the public domain use case (MeaningMine) is already available and consists of several thousand content items per day. Also for the employee use case (IBM) and the business partner use case (SAP) the data model and some initial data on the social network graph structures is available.

User Involvement, Promotion and Awareness

ROBUST has been invited to participate to the User Centric Media cluster of the Networked Media unit at the European Commission. Given a rising interest in social networks and online

communities in the context of user centric media, ROBUST is a well suited partner for collaboration with other EC funded project in this domain. ROBUST has been introduced and presented at the concertation meeting in Brussels in November 2010 and will actively participate in the UCM cluster. ROBUST has also issued a press release, which has sparked interest by the press. Editors from two journals, which target enterprises, i.e. “Mittelstand Wissen” and “wissensmanagement - Das Magazin für Führungskräfte”, have approached the project management in order to report about business online communities. These contributions are now planned to appear in the second quarter of 2011.

Future Work or Exploitation Prospects, as appropriate

Based on the requirements collected from community owners and hosts, the next step will be to prioritise the methods and tools to be developed in the first year. This will indicate also definitions of social, technical and corporate needs in communities, a suitable representation of risks, which features to measure and precise requirements for community simulation.

A first architecture prototype based on TEMIS' Luxid platform and public domain data provided by MeaningMine will be an early demonstrator for the analysis of community generated content.

Further Information

No further remarks at the current stage of the project.