**Abstract**

Reaching out to a large-scale audience via Internet is a fast and cost-effective way compared with postal mail or telephone. Therefore, e-mail has been used not just for research but also for marketing, customer support and other data collection purposes. However, getting an acceptable response rate on the sent e-mails requires additional effort on the researchers’ side. This thesis investigates a communication system which contributes to increasing the response rate while minimizing the burden on the researchers’ side.

To achieve this, the system constructs a work flow which supports researchers in extracting information, providing a rule-based and automated decision-making mechanism for respondents’ e-mails, and personalizes the content of the e-mails with the respondents’ information which is extracted from current or earlier conversations. It also provides an option to enable contributions from other researchers such as assistants to interact with the work flow with the permission of the initial researcher. Therefore, distribution of the work can ease individual efforts of mass e-mail communication. This feature can be further extended by enabling group assistants to contribute to nearly all phases of the communication flow and get guidance or assistance from the initial researcher when required.

This thesis demonstrates that by providing proper work flow and the possibility of an assistant’s contribution, a mass e-mail communication can be achieved in a way that each e-mail is individually tailored to each recipient. This contributes to high response rates. Therefore, while it minimizes the effort required to create e-mails, it maximizes the scale of people communicated with.

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