**Abstract**

Reaching out to a large-scale of people via the Internet through e-mail is a fast and cost-efficient way compared with postal mail or telephone. 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 out emails requires additional effort from the sender. This study 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 workflow supporting the researchers in extracting information, providing a rule-based automated decision making mechanism on the respondents’ emails, and then personalize the content of the emails with the respondents’ information which is extracted from either the current state or earlier conversations. It also provides an option to enable contributions from other researchers as assistants to interact with the work-flow under the permission of the lead researcher. Therefore, the distribution of work can ease an individual’s efforts on mass email communication. This feature can be further extended by enabling crowd assistants to contribute to nearly all phases of the communication flow, and getting guidance or assistance by the lead researcher when the circumstance requires such.

This thesis demonstrates that by providing a proper workflow and enabling the possibility of an assistant contribution, effective and efficient mass email communication can be achieved as if each email was individually tailored for each recipient, which can contribute to a higher response rate. As it minimizes effort on the creation of emails, it maximizes the scale of the number of people communicated to.

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