**Abstract**

Reaching out to masses of people via the Internet is a fast and cost-efficient way compared to postal mail or telephone. Therefore, the use of email has extended beyond research, into marketing, customer support, and other data collection purposes. However, getting an acceptable response rate on the outgoing emails requires additional efforts from 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 workflow helping researchers to extract information, providing rule-based automated decision-making mechanisms on respondents’ emails, and personalizing the content of the emails with the respondents’ information extracted from the current state or from earlier conversations. It also provides an option to enable contribution from other researchers, assistanting interaction with the workflow under the permission of the initial researcher. Therefore, distribution of the work can ease the individual’s efforts on the mass email communication. This feature can be further extended by enabling crowd assistants to contribute to nearly all phases of the communication flow, and by getting guidance or assistance by the initial researcher when required.

This thesis demonstrates that by providing a proper workflow and the possibility of an assistant contribution, a mass email communication can be achieved wherein each email is individually tailored to each recipient, which will contribute to high response rates. Therefore, while minimizing the efforts on the creation of emails, it maximizes the scale of the number of people to which it communicates.

vii