



Exploiting Social Software to Build Open Source Communities

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Outline

- Building open source communities
- Community building as a marketing activity
- The role of social software
- Evaluation
- Conclusions



OS Community Building

- Even though the number of open source software is remarkable, it is still **far from obvious** how to start and run a successful open source project
- Starting an open source project is in fact building a **community** of **users** and **developers** for that project
- What should be considered:
 - **organization** patterns
 - **social** structures
 - **specificities** of the software
 - others: **size**, **domain**, **business** and **support** models, **licensing** scheme



OS Community Building

- The problem of community building can be formulated as a **marketing challenge**: marketing a software to target consumers/producers
- The availability of social software applications has resulted in the constant **emergence** of **online communities**
- A selected set of these communities can be used to pass invitation messages among their members to join the open source project
→ **viral marketing**

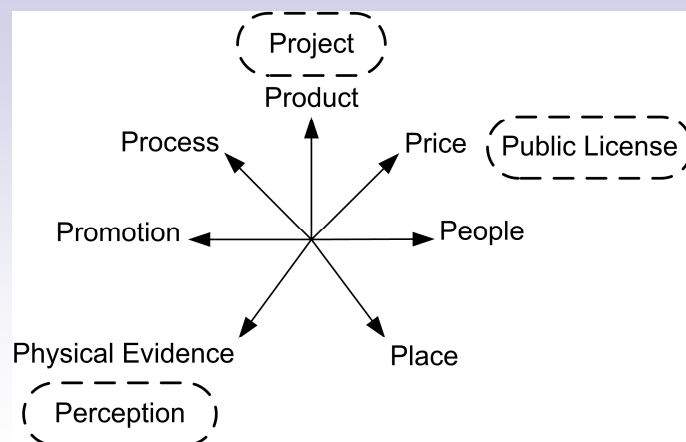


Community Building as a Marketing Activity

- For a viral marketing campaign to be effective, a **well-defined marketing plan** has to be built first → e.g. the 7 P's of the marketing mix model
- Tailoring the 7 P's model to meet the **specificities** of marketing **open software** platforms
- The tailored model is used to identify **ingredients** for the viral marketing campaign:
 - attractive marketing environment
 - compelling information
 - target communities
 - viral messages
 - request handling processes



A Tailored 7 P's of the Marketing Mix Model



A Tailored 7 P's of the Marketing Mix Model

- **Project:** Think of the target software as a project that results into products → organization, process, support, vision statement, name, slogan, logo, description, etc
- **Public license:** using, modifying, and redistributing source code should be practiced according to rules defined in a public license
- **Place:**
 - the place of **marketing efforts**
 - the **geographical regions** where the target communities could reside
- **People:**
 - **interest groups** including universities and research institutes, existing open source communities, social networks, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and governments → *meta-communities*
 - Communities with **active members** and individuals with high **social networking potential**
 - **Human resources** needed to carry out the marketing activities

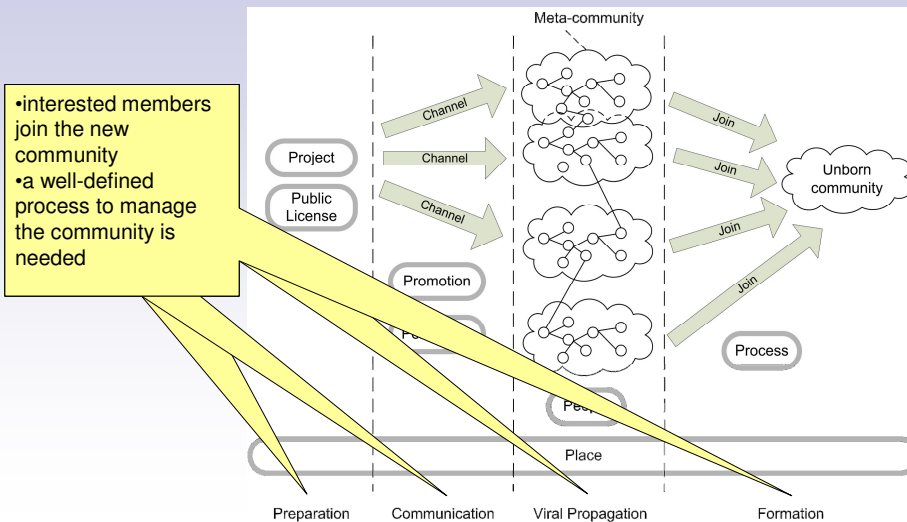


A Tailored 7 P's of the Marketing Mix Model

- **Promotion:** possible *marketing channels* include WWW site, social content sites such as YouTube, mailing lists, and blog entries by famous bloggers
- Effective viral messages** should be formulated for every channel. Example kinds of messages include videos, news blurbs, blog entries, and e-mail messages
- **Perception:** the community perceive the **mission** and the **potential** of the open source project through its infrastructure and promotion messages
 - specificities of people
 - marketing channels
- **Process:**
 - how the elements of the infrastructure should be coordinated to guarantee access to the open source project
 - marketing action points
 - resources needed to execute the marketing plan



A Viral Model for Releasing Software



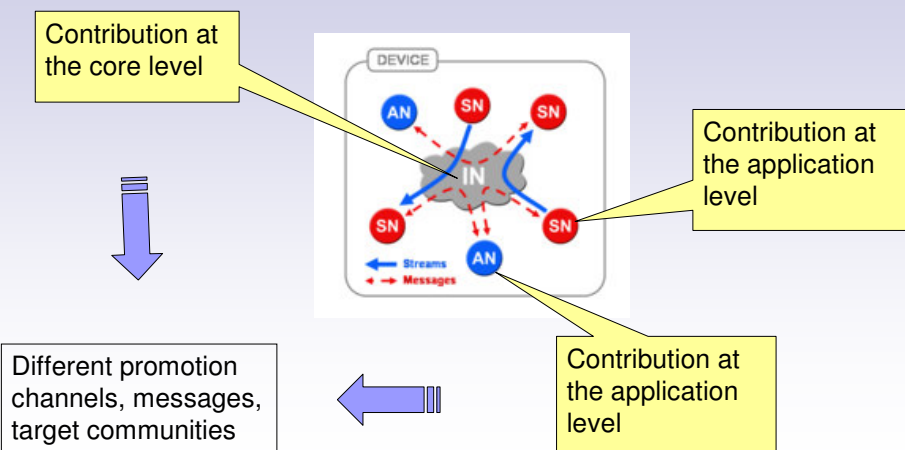
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Evaluation: The NoTA Platform



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Evaluation

- Evaluation criteria:
 - ☐ number of **users** subscribed to the mailing list
 - ☐ number of **downloads** of the software
 - ☐ count of **webpage hits**
 - ☐ number of **views** for the **social media**
 - ☐ number of **projects** built on top of the platform
 - ☐ number and **kind of contributions** received
 - ☐ amount of **requests/feedback/inquiries** received
 - ☐ **geographical** distribution of the community members
 - ☐ **sources** for getting to know the project
 - ☐ participation in project **events** and **meetings**



Conclusions

- A **research project** on building open source communities
- We have formulated the problem of building an open source community as a **marketing activity**
- Existing **marketing models and strategies** exploiting social software networks and applications can be used
- We are working on an **industrial case study**
- More **evaluation/case studies** needed



Thank You!

Q&A

