

Altruistic Knowledge Sharing in Online Communities

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Abstract— This article focuses on social collaboration in online communities and examines how users' altruism affects their knowledge sharing behavior. This article proposes an other-regarding conceptualization of altruism based on the Utility Interdependence Theory of Voluntarism. Awareness of the community's knowledge need is hypothesized to dampen one's free-riding tendency and strengthen knowledge sharing intention. Data from a survey of 100 users of an online community supported the hypotheses. The findings extend our understanding of knowledge sharing by looking beyond egoistic factors and open up several new lines of inquiry that focus on other-regarding factors.

Keyword—Community, social collaboration, knowledge sharing, altruism

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