

Mitigating the Unwillingness of e-Forums Members to Engage in Information Exchange

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Abstract : Social networks such as e-Forums or dating sites often face the reluctance of key members to participate. Relying on the conation theory, this study investigates this phenomenon and proposes solutions to mitigate the issue. We show that highly experienced e-Forum members refuse to share business information in a peer to peer information exchange forums. However, forums managers can mitigate this behavior by developing a sentiment of belongingness to the network. Furthermore, by selecting only elite forum participants with ample experience, they can reduce the reluctance of key information providers to engage in information exchange. Our hypotheses are tested with PLS structural equations modeling using survey data from members of a French e-Forum dedicated to the exchange of business information about exporting.

Keywords : conation, e-Forum, information exchange, members participation

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