

EDITORIAL PREFACE

Special Issue on Networking and Mining

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Welcome to the second issue of volume 5 of the *International Journal of Virtual Communities and Social Networking*. This is a special issue of the journal on Social Networking and Mining, guest edited by Demosthenes Akoumianakis and Nik Bessis. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the special issue editors for the fine job they have done to collect, and review four interesting papers in the area. Let me talk about the papers briefly.

The first paper, “On ‘Inscribed’ and ‘Enacted’ Connectivity” serves as an introduction to the special issue on social networking and mining. In this paper guest editors, Demosthenes Akoumianakis and Nik Bessis, examine the concepts related to social networking and mining. One such concept is connectivity. Connectivity has two forms according to the authors – one is embedded in the technology and the other refers to how users use social networking technologies to collaborate and communicate. The two forms of connectivity, inscribed and enacted, are explained in detail in the article. Akoumianakis and Bessis also provide an overview of other papers in the issue, and describe how these papers are related to the special issue theme.

The second paper in this issue is, “Opportunistic Networks: A Taxonomy of Data Dissemination Techniques,” by Radu Ioan Ciobanu and Ciprian Dobre. The paper examines connectivity in the form of data dissemination in mobile devices, and networks. A type of network in which mobile devices communicate using short-range signals and protocols, can still exchange data. This type of communication between devices where the communication is offloaded is called an opportunistic network. Ciobanu and Dobre provide a taxonomy of data dissemination techniques. The taxonomy is based on four criteria: network organization, node characteristics, content characteristics, and social awareness. The authors analyze properties of four techniques of disseminating data in an opportunistic network using categories of their proposed framework.

The third paper, “Social Ties in Video Sharing Services: Tactics for Excavating Virtual Settlements,” by Demosthenes Akoumianakis, Nikolas Karadimitriou, and Ioannis Kafousis, looks at social formations and cyber-structures enacted in video sharing virtual environments through the conceptual lens of excavation as a metaphor. They present two case studies to

provide baseline data of traces of virtual settlements. These can be evaluated and understood using knowledge visualization techniques. The traces can provide insight into the structural aspects of social technologies, and the dynamic nature of cyber-structures within the environment. If we look at the theme of the special issue, this paper examines connectivity using traces of virtual communities or settlements by evaluating technologies and cyber-structures within the communities.

The final paper of this special issue is, "A Tool for Discourse Analysis and Visualization," by Costin-Gabriel Chiru and Stefan Trausan-Matu. In the paper, the authors present a unique system used for the analyzing collaboration and

social construction of knowledge in groups. The dialogistic polyphonic model was used as the starting point of the research. The paper analyzes both texts written by one author, and those written collaboratively. Visualizations were used for feedback.

Once again I would like to take this opportunity to thank our special issue editors for putting together a collection of excellent articles in the area of social networking and mining.

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