



Online Social Capital: An Agenda for Future Research

International Communication Association 2010 Preconference

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Organizers

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Call for papers

This preconference aims to showcase new scholarly work examining definitional, operational and practical issues related to the study of new forms of social capital, with particular emphasis on case studies and applications beyond the US context. The proliferation of social media, online games and other platforms for online and mobile socializing suggests an increased importance of communication research for the study of social capital and its implications.

Since the late 1980s, scholars have voiced serious concerns about the erosion of public life and sense of community, suggesting the rise of television as well as disappearance of traditional sites of informal sociability as the chief culprits for this phenomenon. Among the key concerns has been the apparent disappearance of social capital and the associated decline in civic and political participation. Given the importance of the concept of social capital in the fields of sociology, political science, public policy, economics, organizational behavior, business as well as communication, it is no surprise that the scholarly debate about its potential decline has been so well-attended.

In recent years, a number of studies have been published indicating an important (and largely) positive role of new media platforms, particularly social media, as the sites for the production of social capital. Furthermore, researchers have started looking beyond the traditional conceptualization and measures of social capital, suggesting new ways to capture the essence of this concept when it comes to purely online or online/offline relationships.

The aim of this preconference is to further promote this line of research and examine technological affordances of different social media platforms. Furthermore, we invite submissions examining the emerging hybrid forms of informal sociability, and discussing the (continued) importance of physical proximity and face-to-face contact for the creation and maintenance of different forms of social capital.

Up to 15 papers will be selected through a peer-review process and divided into three or four interactive panels:

- *Conceptualization & measurement*
- *Applications/case studies (US & non-US context)*
- *Directions for future research*

The preconference will be limited to 50 participants and will take place at an off-conference site; a preconference registration fee will be announced at a later date.

Submission guidelines

- Abstracts of no more than 500 words are due on 7 November, 2009.
- Submit your abstract to marko@ntu.edu.sg as an MS Word attachment (please use your full name to label the file).
- The authors of accepted abstracts will be notified by 15 December, 2009.
- Final papers (5,000-8,000 words) are due by 1 April, 2010.