

User engagement in the context of open collaborative projects

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Industry / Practice Partner: Jointcreate.com

1. Background, Challenge & Objectives

Background / Context

Open innovation (OI) is a model where firms blend external and internal ideas for new offerings, relying on collaborative innovation that spans companies and communities. Online platforms like jointcreate.com support this cooperation, but sustaining active, long-term crowd participation is challenging. Key to addressing this is understanding the factors behind user engagement and disengagement, as well as the depth of their involvement.

Challenge / Research Questions

The goal is to foster continuous user contribution and commitment, enhancing platform interaction and mutual benefits. The research focuses on user engagement, recognizing its dependency on context and individual factors. Identifying engagement attributes within this professional collaborative setting is the primary challenge.

RQ: How to engage the participants in order to encourage them to keep contributing to OI projects?

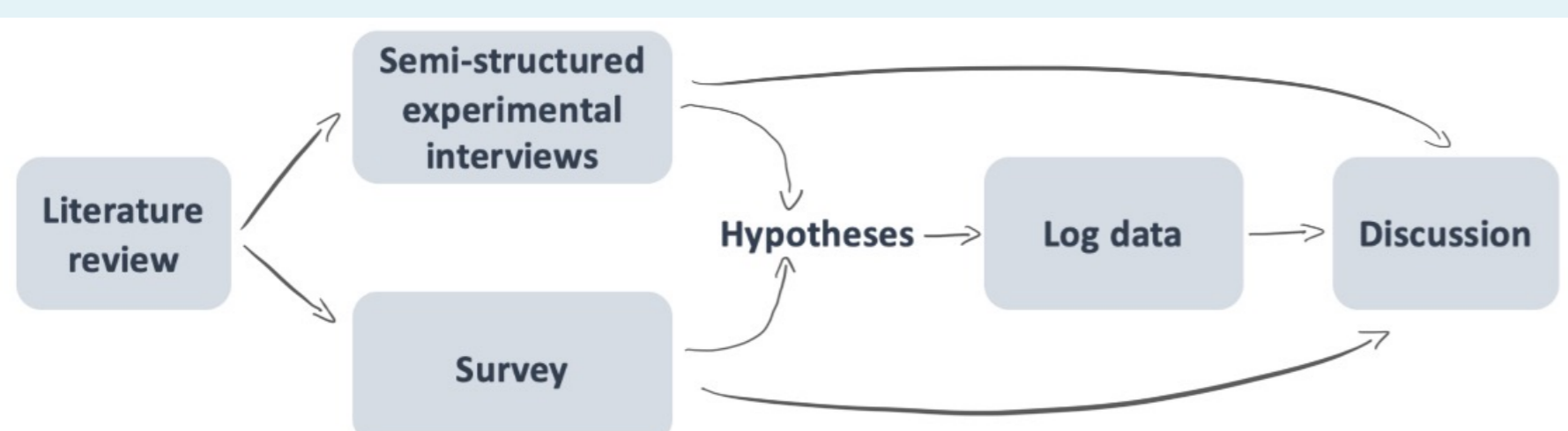
Objectives / Hypotheses

1. There is only a small number of long-term users on the platform.
2. Most user do not contribute.
3. Users engage with specific types of content.

2. Methodology / Materials

Methodology

The methodology follows a mixed-method approach, applying an exploratory sequential research design. A survey for the platform users measures the perceived engagement and agency. Semi-structured exploratory interviews are conducted with first-time users to understand the drivers and barriers of engagement, as well as the perceived purpose of the platform. The two methods are used to create three hypotheses, that are quantitatively explored using the log data of the platform.



The research process

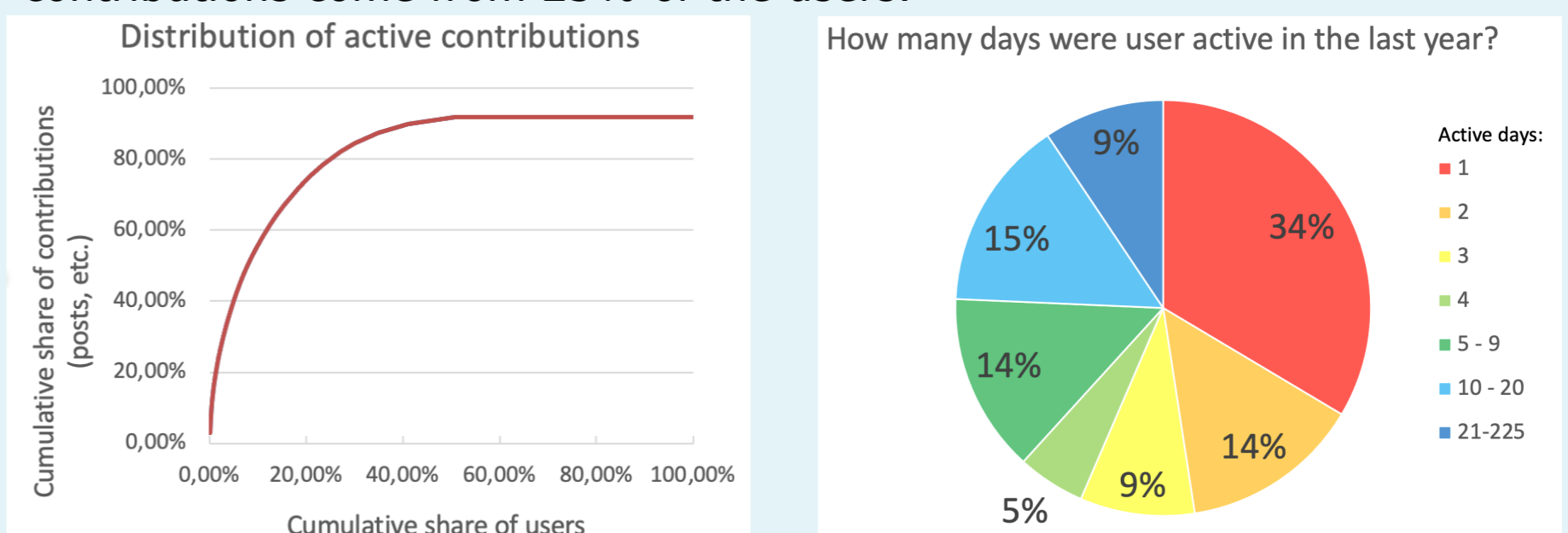
Materials / Data / Tools

- Survey: Send to all 1174 jointcreate.com users
- Interviews: 9 first-time users by convenience sampling
- Log data: The log data of 1 year and 2 months (Muss auch noch in den Report!!), which includes the activity of 1234 users, spread over 70'000 logged server requests

3. Results / Solution / Recommendations

Activity on the platform

Visits on the platform are rare and short-lived. The pareto-principle applies for the number of contributions (posts, etc.), 80 % of contributions come from 25% of the users.



Multi-faceted platform model

Open collaborative platforms should be three-dimensional to facilitate crowdsourcing, communities, and teams.

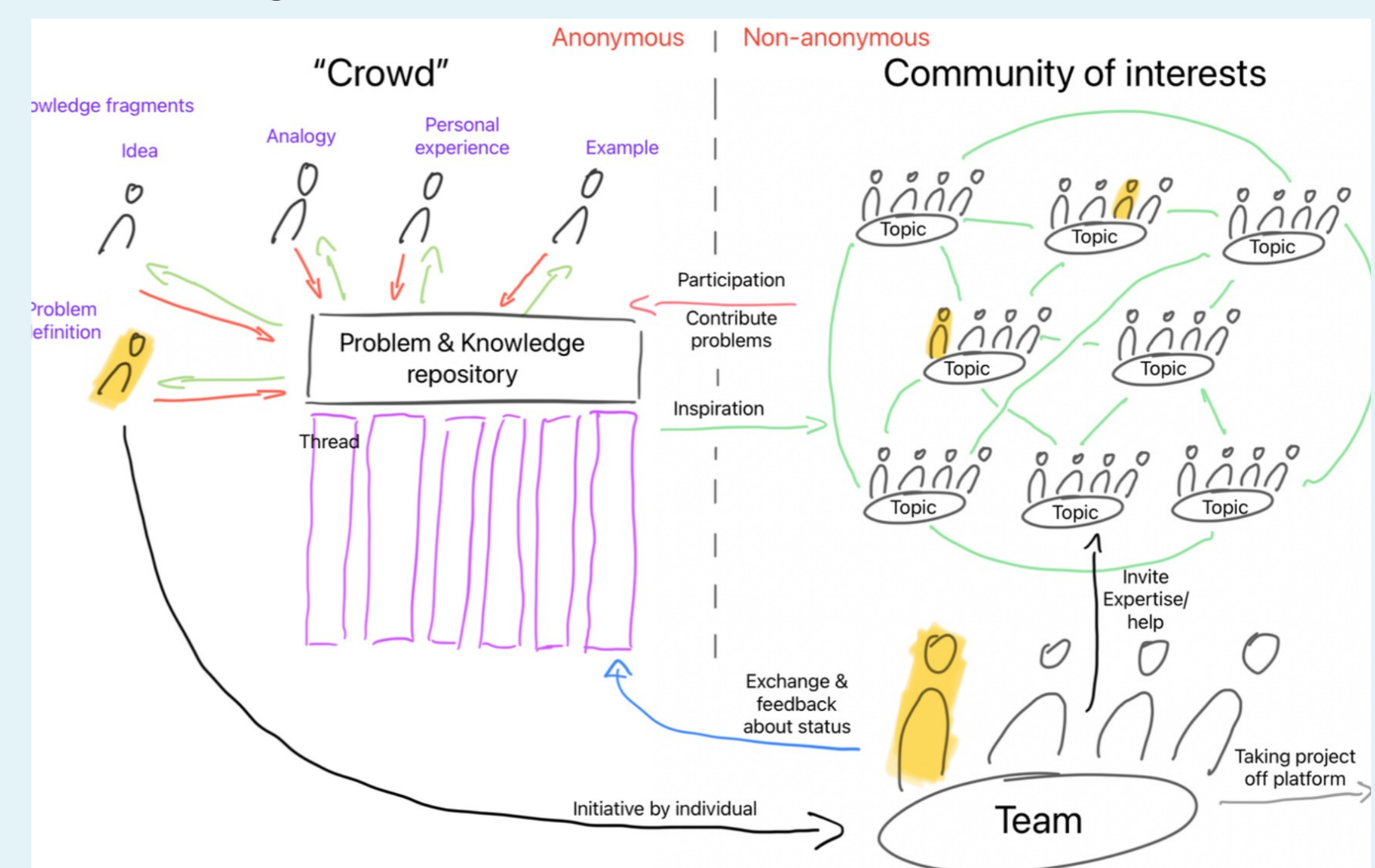


Figure: The proposed model for open collaboration platforms

4. Discussion, Conclusions & Outlook

Discussion

Engagement on open collaboration platforms can be increased by providing context about the platform and its purpose, by designing for desired content and by changing the organization of the users.

Conclusions

Engagement can be leveraged to effectively increase participation in open collaboration platforms, leading to a thriving and exciting approach to innovation.

Outlook

Future research should focus on systems to protect the crowd from exploitation, to significantly improve psychological safety and engagement. The crowd should be actively involved in the research.

Literature

- Majchrzak, A., & Malhotra, A. (2020a). Unleashing the crowd: Collaborative solutions to wicked business and societal problems. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25557-2>
- O'Brien, H. L., Roll, I., Kampen, A., & Davoudi, N. (2022). Rethinking (Dis)engagement in human-computer interaction. Computers in Human Behavior, 128, 107109. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.107109>