THE RISE OF THE PROMOTERS: USER CLASSES AND CONTRIBUTION PATTERNS IN ENTERPRISE SOCIAL MEDIA

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The proliferation of enterprise social media (ESM) has created opportunities for employees to self-organize around common goals or interests. However, little is known about the different user classes that exist in ESM and the factors that drive contributions to ESM communities. Using multi-level analyses of secondary data from the ESM of a global organization, we find that (1) although ESM communities reflect a core-periphery structure similar to that identified in other forms of online communities, nearly two-thirds of the users represent promoters—a distinct class of users who use the platform primarily to post promotional content without viewing existing content created by others; and (2) despite individual differences in user type, the actual contribution to an ESM community is the result of an intricate interaction between a user’s disposition for participation and a set of group characteristics. Our findings suggest that recognizing the unique contribution patterns of different user groups is key to understanding participation in ESM communities.

Keywords: Promoters, Enterprise Social Media, Online Communities, Group Size, Group Visibility, Participation Inequality, Collaboration