



## **LEARNING SOCIAL INNOVATION TOGETHER:** **Online Social Networking and Software Overview**

by Karen Wolf<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

The Innovation Network for Communities (INC) is a national non-profit whose mission is to help develop and spread scalable innovations that transform the performance of community systems. INC works to support scalable innovations in a wide variety of sectors, including economic development, education, workforce development, land use, transportation, energy, health care and other systems.

Unfortunately, the process of community-systems innovation remains fragmented, undisciplined, slow, and financially inefficient. Except in a few situations, social entrepreneurs are isolated from each other and have weak connections at best to private businesses and markets. An INC core hypothesis is that work at the community level can be enhanced by national and international capacities including networks to support and connect social entrepreneurs. INC is therefore exploring how to use social networking models to create JIT, online capabilities to exchange information about community innovations. This scan of the current state of social networking on the Internet was completed to provide background for evaluating opportunities within the social innovation field.

### **Background**

While each passing year has brought more users to the Internet and faster communications, it's also true that meaningful connections have lagged. Beyond email, the amount of true interactivity among people on the web has been fairly limited. "Social networking", a new expression for an old concept, is however rapidly changing the Internet's landscape and creating a new buzz. As it relates to online interaction, understanding the concept "Web 2.0" is a good place to start. Web 2.0 refers to a perceived second-generation of web-based communities and hosted services (including social-networking sites) which aim to facilitate collaboration and sharing between users. Before going any further, I would encourage the reader to watch the video "[The Machine is Us/ing Us](#)" which explains Web 2.0 in less than 5 minutes. It effectively summarizes the new arena we are entering as our electronic interactions play a larger role in the way we spend our time.

The world displayed through the video is creative, vibrant and exciting but also slippery, unpredictable and vulnerable. Enter an environment that feasts on human interaction with

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limited oversight and anything can happen (good and not so good). While many of us were busy emailing, finding cupid at Match.com or trying to understand where people find time to blog, a small army has been developing a constellation of online tools that can be (at least loosely) tied together in the broad category of social software. This platform provides mere mortals throughout the world the opportunity to come together -- often separately -- to evolve, build and morph just about every aspect of our very existence.

Stowe Boyd, an expert on building social applications, describes the Web 2.0 Revolution this way:

*"A new category of software is emerging, software intended to augment social systems. Not to change the company inadvertently, like email did, when the electronic analogue of interoffice mail became something else, grew into something else by changing the way people communicated, and led to a change in the structure of the company. No this new generation of software is intentional, designed from the start to guide human behavior into new paths and patterns, to counter prevailing ways of interaction. I call these social tools: software intended to shape culture."*

Social software opens the door for interaction in a way that is changing how we live online and off. Opportunities for gathering, customizing and sharing information to entertain, exchange, transact, learn, accomplish tasks and solve problems are being enhanced by its power. Organizations and individuals are starting to take advantage of these technologies to address the important issues in society, but they have yet to develop an audience to pose and solve a serious challenge. The mass public continues to primarily be engaged to be amused and entertained.

While there is no dominant player at the intersection of social innovation and social networking, many are using the web to share information and experiment with interaction. Getting literate and on board is quickly becoming an important differentiator. No one knows where the journey will take us, but it is important to not be left behind as the innovative entrepreneurs are going to be hanging out in the virtual communities.

### Social Software Defined

The various tools provided through social software are an increasing presence in the online world and offline lives of its users. As Joseph Ugoretz, Director of Technology and Learning at Macaulay Honors College, CUNY describes it:

*"Social software includes many communication media, but the new tools all fit three broad descriptions. These tools are **interactive**, with the content created and structured by a wide mass of contributors. These tools are also **interconnected**, with user-provided searchable links structuring and cross-referencing that content. And finally, these tools are **bottom-up and communitarian**, with the users of the tools providing and benefiting from associations, reputations, and authority within a many-to-many community."*

Social software allows users to discover, extend, manage and leverage their personal networks – a revolutionary new approach to knowledge exchange. Microsoft's Social Computing Group uses the term "virtual community" to mean a gathering of people in an online space where

individuals come together to connect, interact, and get to know each other better over time. Initially those in the virtual community may be there based on self-interest – people usually network together for their own benefit and to develop their own work – moving in and out based on how much they personally benefit from participating. However, over time, the potential exists for a network of kindred spirits to transition to a community of practice and potentially a system of influence.

*“When separate, local efforts connect with each other as networks, then strengthen as communities of practice, suddenly and surprisingly a new system emerges at a greater level of scale. This system of influence possesses qualities and capacities that were unknown in the individuals. It isn’t that they were hidden; they simply don’t exist until the system emerges. They are properties of the system, not the individual, but once there, individuals possess them. And the system that emerges always possesses greater power and influence than is possible through planned, incremental change. Emergence is how life creates radical change and takes things to scale.”*

(From [“Using Emergence to Take Social Innovation to Scale”](#), by Margaret Wheatley and Deborah Frieze)

### The Application of Social Software

The conglomeration of web sites and options for consumer-oriented social networking services is vast. Sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and MySpace leverage social software to make visible to users the connections that are hidden in the real world. This concept is explained in another excellent video [“Social Networking in Plain English.”](#) The demand has driven entrepreneurs to create places for almost any subset of the human species to socialize and connect. [“Top 50 Notable Social Networking Sites”](#) provides a summary of the industry leaders and confirms that different people use different services for different purposes. For example, college kids connect at Facebook; post college 20-somethings find dates on Friendster or Xanga; self-expressive types emote at LifeJournal; and the career-minded build reputations at LinkedIn.

For many, online networking for entertainment may be their first contact with social software (LinkedIn adds more than 10 new members every minute; MySpace adds more than 150) and therefore the experience will affect attitudes toward other applications of the same or similar software. The tools and interests that make interaction and interconnectivity happen at popular sites like MySpace and FaceBook, also create opportunities for gathering, customizing, and sharing information for different purposes. Besides meeting and connecting with others for social reasons, web sites use an individual's willingness to contribute to accomplish more.

One important development is the social context that is being brought to the organization of information and resources on the web. For more than a decade, the primary way to categorize and find information on the Internet was through the automated algorithms of search engines, a process at once laborious and highly imprecise. The introduction of tagging systems has created a community generated organization of material on the web. A “tag” is a keyword or term associated with or assigned to a piece of information (e.g. a picture, article or video clip), thus describing the item and enabling keyword-based classification of information. “Tagging” is used to describe human indexing of material on the Web, which in theory makes content more

intuitively found and shared. Tagging systems are also known sometimes as "folksonomies"--a combination of "folk" and "taxonomy" – as well as "shared bookmarking." Tags are usually created by users themselves, rather than site owners, and make many online services far more accessible and useful than they had ever been before.

The idea behind tagging may be irresistibly simple, but its ramifications are enormous and complex. Tagging has quickly gained popularity because it allows human beings to bring intuitive organization to what otherwise would be largely anonymous entries in an endless sea of data. Moreover, beyond its practicality, others find a philosophical significance in tagging because it is consistent with the social thinking often associated with the beginnings of the Internet. What many fans of tagging like best is that it is a system that empowers individuals. And after years of users trying to find their way around Web sites using categories defined by a small number of people running those sites, tagging is a huge relief. Evolving folksonomies define a set of tagging conventions through group consensus, rather than by use of a formalized standard.

Individuals and communities of similarly motivated people have leveraged the power of social software and tagging to accomplish a wide variety of purposes:

Purpose	Examples
Definitions and Descriptions	<a href="#">Wikipedia</a> -- multilingual, web-based, free content encyclopedia project written collaboratively by volunteers from all around the world.
Shared Images	<a href="#">Flickr</a> – tagged photography site.
Shared Video	<a href="#">YouTube</a> -- tagged video clips site.
Organizing Information	<a href="#">del.icio.us</a> -- best-known service for bookmarking the Web.
Shared Research	<a href="#">Connotea</a> -- helps researchers and clinicians manage and share information

...and it doesn't stop there. Creative applications -- with new software and the combination of existing tools -- pop up everyday. A couple of fun examples include:

[Wizlite](#) -- allows you to highlight text (like on real paper) on any page on the Internet and share it with everybody (or just your friends).

[Diigo](#) -- supports "social annotation" for sharing, interacting, adding sticky notes, etc. on any web page.

[Wink](#) – a social search engine to find people on social networks.

### The Business of Social Software

The field of social networks and virtual communities is new, relatively unstructured, and very dynamic. However, it is not a passing fad. Organizations everywhere are struggling to understand and benefit from it. Information professionals are challenged to apply new tools to enhance the traditional skills of finding, evaluating, organizing and applying information to meet organizational needs and financial goals. A rapidly growing group of software entrepreneurs has emerged to take advantage of the drive to connect, creating applications designed to enrich

businesses and business relationships. Leaders in this software domain have created functionality to accomplish tasks in new ways. Concepts that are core to the business world, such as brainstorming, are being enhanced by online capabilities for exchanging information.

IBM applied “Global Jam” – a term more commonly used for music sessions (“jam”) to online brainstorming starting back in 2001. IBM’s largest online Jam to date was in 2006 – InnovationJam – which brought together 15,000 people and resulted in 10 new businesses with seed investment of over \$100 million. An online Jam typically is organized around a topic with specific outcomes in mind (to avoid having it just be a gab session). Discussions are organized as forums which in essence are threaded messages. Participation in the dialog can be through the Web site or by subscription which pushes all messages to an inbox as emails. The Jam site encourages personalization by providing a place for people to load their profile so it is possible to check out each contributor’s background. The host usually is responsible at the end for summarizing key findings and determining next steps. Jams are an emerging social networking tool for getting constructive work done in real time by leveraging the expertise and knowledge of a distributed community.

Business leaders in the social networking software domain include both familiar faces and brave new start-ups. The most powerful applications are those which go beyond automating an existing task to creating a new, value-add service.

Primary Function	Software or Service Provider
Real time communications	AIM, Chat, VoIP, SMS, ICQ, Skype, IRC, Net2Phone
Contact data management	GoodContacts, Plaxo
Blogs and <a href="#">RSS</a>	Six Apart, Technorati, Urchin, Feedburner, Newsgator, Pheedo
Business-focused social network services	LinkedIn, OpenBC/Xing, Ecademy, Ryze, ZeroDegrees
Event and meeting facilitation	Meetup, Evite, Cvent
Tagging, social bookmarking and folksonomy	43things, del.icio.us
Wiki software	Social Text, Wikia, JotSpot (acquired by Google), Twiki
Relationship capital management	Contact Network, Spoke Software, VisiblePath, Interface Software, Leverage Software
Social network analysis & knowledge management	Tacit, Entopia
Biographic analysis & people search	Zoominfo, Spokesoftware, Jigsaw, LinkedIn
Enterprise social network software	IBM, Connectbeam, Haystack/Credo
Job referral networks	Accolo, Jobster, H3.com

### Out of This World

Taken to the extreme, social software can provide a platform where individuals can engage in a way that actually generates a community that exists in a new virtual world. The term "virtual world" is usually thought of as a kind of alternative world, conceived to provide online

entertainment to users. In the past few years, however, numerous virtual worlds have begun moving beyond entertainment toward a completely new objective that is likely to extend the abilities of present-day real-time collaborations. Nowadays, virtual worlds are equipped with social networking facilities and online collaboration tools (including blogs, personal home pages, and sometimes [VoIP](#)), making them highly valuable spaces for e-learning and long-distance collaboration. Many of these virtual worlds are also promoting a new way of marketing content and products by integrating support for e-commerce. These virtual worlds are created to showcase some or all of the following social networking site attributes:

- Users can build new environments: Users can create new entities — such as new businesses, houses, or products — beyond the ones already provided by the site.
- Property ownership: The virtual world attributes ownership rights to a user who creates or purchases a product or property.
- 3-D or 2-D avatars (an internet user's representation of himself or herself): Users can modify an avatar and create custom characters.
- Text chat: Users can immediately interact with one another via text chat.
- VoIP: The virtual world offers integrated VoIP features, allowing users to communicate by speaking directly to one another.
- Integrated e-commerce: The site allows users to sell their own products within the virtual world.
- Local currency: The site has a currency that regulates economic exchanges within that world.
- Community events: Users can create events and publicly showcase them.
- Games: The site offers single- and multi-player games.

Second Life is one virtual world getting a lot of interest. While it does seem a bit nutty that people are spending real money buying unreal things, a look at who has taken up residence implies something important is going on. Rob Cottingham and Catherine Winters of *Social Signal* — builders of on-line communities -- provide a useful overview of Second Life in their article, "[Second Life: What it is and why it matters](#)" but in summary:

Second Life matters because...

- It's a big community, and growing quickly – from 100,000 user accounts at the end of 2005 to well over 2 million today. That's a lot of people.
- It's social. You can quickly develop an extensive network of contacts, professional and personal, using everything from Second Life's built-in interest group functions to chance encounters.
- It's a community of open-minded, motivated users. Second Life residents are coming to that world expressly to engage, and its very nature encourages active participation.
- It's instantly ready for e-commerce. Whether you want to raise funds or sell virtual widgets, you can set up shop quickly and easily without getting entangled in merchant accounts or security certificates.

- It's a no-to-low-cost way to collaborate and communicate. Your team members can join each other quickly and easily from around the world, whether for an informal chat or a two-hour meeting.
- It's an ideal space for innovation and experimentation. The informal rules and economic structure of Second Life are still shifting, and the opportunities for social and technological innovation abound.
- It's a uniquely rich experience. Think of the intensity of video, the interactivity of the web, the intimacy of face-to-face contact – combined. Now think of how that level of communication can enrich engagement with an audience.

### Exchanging Online

Virtual communities depend upon social interaction and exchange between users online and rely on the reciprocity element of the unwritten social contract between community members. A successful, JIT, online exchange of innovative information is sustained by an environment where participants willingly contribute their best ideas. In the social innovation domain, this exchange is envisioned as occurring without the standard motivating and organizing factor of financial reward. Currently online transactions involve products, services, knowledge, information or simply attention but the concept of valued exchange is central to a healthy virtual community and key to keeping members engaged. The expectation of “give” and “take” pertains whether the trade is tangible or emotional.

The familiar online auction business model which introduced the concept of exchange based on bidding for products and services over the internet, has created a community of traders where personal relationships can develop over time. The dependable, user-friendly interface makes it possible for people to efficiently engage with little more than a credit card (or Paypal account) and an Internet connection. People trust it will work and that resources exist to mitigate problems. Predictability and facilitation are key features which make the community functional. Ebay is one popular example.

While historically much of online exchange has more to do with material transactions than sociability, an interesting intersection of both exists at networks supporting "regiving" -- the practice of giving away one's goods to others. Most regiving networks depend on forums such as Yahoo Groups as their technology base. Forums are used because they are generally free, extensible, and well understood platforms. The Freecycle Network is the online equivalent of the college-campus “free box” evolving into a community where goods which no longer meet the needs of the owner are offered to others for reuse or recycling. Often the motive is explicitly environmental, with regiving fitting in with the reduce, reuse, recycle approach to conserving resources. For others, and especially in its original contexts, the motives may initially be charitable but if the “regiver” happens to make friends along the way, it’s even more satisfying and therefore participants are more likely to revisit the site.

Ideas or intellectual property are also exchanged on the internet. A number of sites are totally focused on matchmaking between those with and those looking for intellectual property or solutions. In these cases, the electronic tools not only help make the introduction, but also facilitate the legal processes and actual transaction. In some cases, access to the marketplace requires a participation fee. In others, the site host receives revenue by taking a cut of the action once a transaction has taken place. Some of the best known examples include:

- [www.yet2.com](http://www.yet2.com) - Founded in 1999, to focus on bringing buyers and sellers of technologies together so that all parties maximize the return on their investments.
- [www.techex.com](http://www.techex.com) - Match making between corporate licensing professionals and venture capitalists with a specific interest to research institutions and corporations with technology they wish to out-license.
- [www.innocentive.com](http://www.innocentive.com) - Web-based community matching top scientists to relevant R&D challenges facing leading companies around the globe.
- [www.newideatrade.com](http://www.newideatrade.com) - Pioneer of online trading of intellectual property.
- [www.creativitypool.com](http://www.creativitypool.com) -- Free database for anyone in need of a creative idea.

Organizations focused on “the greater good” have been able to attract "buyers" and "sellers" motivated by something other than financial ends. While it is difficult to measure the actual traffic or number of informational or inspirational exchanges, several sites do demonstrate ongoing dialog around social innovation. Typically participation is free but registration is required to gather information on the participants and somewhat regulate the information “deposits.”

#### The Social Innovation Online Players

A number of organizations have evolved beyond a pure “push” model of providing static information regarding social innovation on their Web sites. The least sophisticated of these offer the opportunity for visitors to post information – sometimes by submitting the data to an email address rather than directly online, but they do not support commentary or post interactive dialog (e.g. Civic Practices Network, European Urban Knowledge Network). The next level of refinement can be seen at sites that support discussion forums and/or blogs where interaction through posted comments takes place (e.g. Worldchanging.org, Idealist.org). At these sites, the interaction culture ranges from unmoderated “free-thinking” conversations (e.g. A World of Possibilities) to expert facilitation (e.g. Skoll Foundation). Changemakers (Ashoka) and Launchpad (Young Foundation) are noteworthy sites in that the online dialog is aimed at actually building a solution to an identified issue. A voting feature has been added to several sites providing a simple participatory feature which can be used to rank and display ideas based on visitor input (e.g. UnLtd, Global Ideas Bank). Some sites have started to integrate a number of social networking tools to support a variety of media types (video, photos, text, mapping, etc.). While this does encourage creativity and may serve to attract a younger user group due to a more contemporary feel and consumer focus (e.g. SERVnet, Change.org), whether or not these features serve to retain participants and improve the resulting community is unknown at this point.

Organizations with the best demonstration of leveraging social networking to further their cause in an electronic format include:

- Changemakers ([www.ashoka.org/changemakers](http://www.ashoka.org/changemakers)) – an online community that “open sources” innovative solutions to social problems worldwide with its focus on thematic, collaborative competitions. Competition entries are transparently displayed online for anyone to see and comment on through an online review. Additionally competitors can revise their entries until the close of the competition, incorporating input from peers to create “open sourcing social solutions™.” Changemakers claims the “world’s first global online open source community.”

- SERVnet (<http://servenet.org>) – a joint venture of iBelong Network and Youth Service America which is one of the most comprehensive examples of integrating advanced web-based social networking tools such as shared news feeds and real-time news alerts via email, mobile messaging, searchable user profile pages, issue-related groups, widgets, maps and free self-service websites for nonprofit organizations to support a global network of volunteers. Built on iBelong's proprietary platform, the site allows comment, supports tagging and ranking for contributed success stories, news blogs, press releases and quotable quotes. Authors create profiles to share stories and photos and their locations can be displayed using a mapping feature.
- Development Gateway Foundation ([www.developmentgateway.org](http://www.developmentgateway.org)) – portal supports seven online communities centered on specific themes (Development Effectiveness; Human Development; Environment; Education; Conflict and Development, Health and Nutrition; Technology and Development; Economic Development and Regional Interest) where knowledge, tools, commentary and contacts are submitted by users. Organizational design includes facilitation and guidance by experts in the field.
- Skoll Foundation ([www.skollfoundation.org](http://www.skollfoundation.org)) - sponsors the Social Edge, a global online community where social entrepreneurs and other practitioners of the social benefit sector connect to network, learn, inspire and share resources. Includes two online discussions per week moderated by experts in the field, as well as blogs and podcasts. Registered members can also ask questions in "Expert Advice" with answers and comments posted online.
- Berkana Institute ([www.berkana.org](http://www.berkana.org)) – organizes “communities of practice” -- a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and who interact regularly to learn how to do it better. The exchanges are organized around 7 practice areas: Feeding Ourselves Sustainably; Health and Healing; Beyond Schooling; Media, Arts and Culture; Upcycling and Ecobuilding; Businesses We Believe In; and Youth Leading. Members of each community participate by contributing their knowledge of ideas, programs, books, articles, films, websites, events, etc. in the practice areas.
- The Young Foundation ([www.youngfoundation.org.uk](http://www.youngfoundation.org.uk)) - their Launchpad platform encourages collaboration by inviting ideas for solving identified challenges. Discussion forums enable other individuals to comment on the ideas. Through this network of collaboration, promising ideas can be developed to become Launchpad projects. The Young Foundation is also a partner in Social Innovation eXchange (SIX) ([www.socialinnovationexchange.org](http://www.socialinnovationexchange.org)). While it is too early to determine their success, SIX aims to develop existing and new links with similar organizations and social enterprises all over the world, providing a network of networks. By connecting people, bringing together resources and sharing ideas and practical solutions, “SIX will raise the profile of social innovation, and help accelerate the process and its effects all over the world.”
- Change.org ([www.change.org](http://www.change.org)) - aims to transform social activism by serving as the central platform that connects likeminded people and enables them to exchange information, share ideas, and collectively act to address the issues they care about. Networks that develop through Change.org, are connected to nonprofit organizations that are already working to advance worthy causes. A social network evolves around each nonprofit, allowing people to participate in new ways – by posting ideas and

suggestions, engaging in direct dialogue and organizing communities of donors, volunteer events and rallies. In May 2007, Change.org launched new political features to allow loosely connected citizens sharing a perspective to collectively challenge the power of special interests in politics.

- UnLtd ([www.unltd.org.uk](http://www.unltd.org.uk)) – this site’s ideas bank allows visitors to post, share and discuss UK- related social ideas. Readers can provide comments and rate the solutions on a 10-point scale for feasibility, humor, originality and overall.
- Global Ideas Bank ([www.globalideasbank.org](http://www.globalideasbank.org)) – while not limited to social innovation, is an example of an online database of ideas submitted by people from all over the world. Visitors vote to have the best ideas rise to the top democratically.

### **NEXT STEPS: Developing a Community Innovation Sharing Structure**

#### Getting Started

Due to the consumer-orientation of the most popular social networking sites, much of the analysis of what’s behind a successful venture sounds a lot like throwing a good party:

1. Have a great idea and host
2. Set the mood
3. Invite the right people
4. Spend time setting up
5. Open the doors
6. Crank it up to the next level
7. Expect gate crashers, and finally
8. Bask in the afterglow of creating something special.

(Adapted from [http://blog.ning.com/2007/03/eight\\_steps\\_to\\_creating\\_a\\_grea.html](http://blog.ning.com/2007/03/eight_steps_to_creating_a_grea.html))

As silly as this analogy can become, paying attention to the culture of the virtual community does have merit. The opportunity exists to create a dinner party where every participant is treated as a “guest” or a fraternity party where anything goes. Especially if ideas are being contributed without financial reward, an environment that is predictably friendly, efficient and current will cause more entrepreneurs to accept the invitation to contribute.

For most organizations, it appears that they first consider online communities as a way to share information. They are attracted by the ease, low cost, and speed of posting documents and links of all kinds. It is also appealing to believe that people will come forward to share their knowledge and help one another solve problems. Network theory teaches us that the value of a network is increased exponentially with the addition of each new node. The broad net that can be cast electronically feeds the notion that innovation (vs. the same old) will result.

A productive online community needs to be organized so that it delivers “action research” as part of its work process and generates a new kind of qualitative data at a pace never before imagined. A successful “Virtual Community for Social Innovation” would explicitly focus on the production of knowledge in the public interest and accomplish work to build or contribute to

networks of collective intelligence. This type of community will not happen all at once, or without planning and careful execution. History has shown that in many cases, these expectations for online networking and valued production are not met. Many a web site or community has found that "if you build it, they won't come." It has been suggested throughout various global jams, blogs and articles that while social software can be a critical tool to accomplish work, other things such as a specific and time-limited goal are critical. Other important features include explicit strategy, appropriate leadership, thoughtful facilitation, adequate resources and respected stewardship.

Critical Elements In a Community Innovation Sharing Structure

If indeed a lot of innovation is stimulated by a problem or challenge, what will happen when it becomes possible and easy to find out what others anywhere in the world have done and achieved or failed to achieve in a subject area? While no one yet knows the answer to this question, social software and the concepts behind online networking and exchange will play an important role. While the discovery of what is required to make a virtual community successful is still very much work in progress, some elements have been identified which appear critical.

Basic Framework

- The network should be organized to support exchange between those with an “innovation demand” and those with knowledge/experience in designing and implementing successful social innovations (“innovation supply”).
- Customer access should be provided to individuals, organizations and communities seeking to impact or solve a social problem using an emerging or proven innovative concept or program.
- Customers may be those planning to be personally involved in implementation or researchers obtaining information to share with others.
- Supplier access should be provided to individuals, organizations or communities who have solved or impacted a social problem using a proven innovative concept or program and entrepreneurs with an emerging innovative idea seeking a venue for prototyping or further research.
- Organizational control and facilitation must be carefully structured so that the arena of exchange is efficient, trusted and sustainable.

Most Control	Arena of Exchange	Least Control
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers and Suppliers are pre-qualified.</li> <li>• Access is password protected.</li> <li>• Site is actively monitored.</li> </ul>	<----->	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation is open to all.</li> <li>• Site is managed to prevent inappropriate material, only.</li> </ul>

Value-Added Services That Will Attract and Retain Users

- Easy access -- A very cost-efficient way of finding out what social innovations have been developed by others which could be imported by another entity.
- Understandable -- Standardized ways of describing social innovation so that it is easier to understand what it is and assess whether it might fit the existing innovation demand.
- Predictable transactions -- Confidence in the validity of the information exchanged and terms for potential commercial engagement (consulting).
- Facilitation – Forums for discussing opportunities and learnings amongst those working in a specific innovation sector must be content rich and consistently value-add.

### Important Areas to be Resolved and Developed

- Descriptions -- Format for categorizing and sharing information on the innovation demand (problem to be solved) and social innovations that are available in the marketplace.
- Scope and focus – Agreement on the breadth of social innovation that would be covered (e.g. specific sectors or total domain).
- Screening – Criteria for determining whether or not an idea/program is an "innovation" with potential for exportation and replication.
- Access – The terms of access for both customers and suppliers.
- Funding – Determining the costs of running the network and how to pay for it.
- Participation – Pre-qualification and/or standards to manage quality of community.
- Network management – Responsibility for facilitating the network and managing the relationships between members and resolving conflicts.
- Reason for being – Sharing for the collective good, revenue generating, other?
- Infrastructure – Security and legal best practices
- Feedback – Measurement and reporting for participants and funders.

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## **Appendix A: Social Network Glossary**

**Collaborative Software** -- Software designed to help people involved in a common task achieve their goals. Collaborative software is the basis for computer-supported, cooperative work. Such software systems as email, calendaring, text chat, and wiki belong in this category. Groupware can be divided into three categories depending on the level of collaboration: communication tools, conferencing tools, and collaborative management (coordination) tools. For some examples, go to <http://www.basecamp.com>, <http://www.webex.com>.

**Contact Management Software** -- Software that helps you aggregate and analyze data about the people you know: not only the name, phone, and email, but also notes and personality profiles. You can keep details of past interactions and develop comprehensive profiles. For some examples, go to <http://www.plaxo.com>, <http://www.goodcontacts.com>.

**Enterprise Social Capital Management Software** -- Software that captures the capabilities of the human capital (down to the level of the individual) and maps it to the flow of information and knowledge in an organization. It often incorporates social network analysis tools. For some examples, go to <http://www.visiblepath.com>, <http://www.tacitsoftware.com>.

**Enterprise Social Networking Software** -- A suite of applications built upon a platform that will provide several of the following; blogging, people search, social network analysis, tagging, wiki, collaboration/groupware, etc. For some examples, go to <http://www.connectbeam.com>, <http://www.smallworldlabs.com>, <http://www.atlassian.com>, and <http://www.ibm.com/lotus/connections>.

**Network Analysis** and its close cousin, traffic analysis, have significant use in intelligence. By monitoring the communication patterns between the network nodes, its structure can be established. This can be used for uncovering insurgent networks of both a hierarchical and leaderless nature. For some examples of service providers and computer programs, go to <http://www.orgnet.com> and a good directory at [http://www.insna.org/INSNA/soft\\_inf.html](http://www.insna.org/INSNA/soft_inf.html).

**People Search** -- Includes Web sites and social networks that allow the user to query the database for an individual by name. For some examples, go to <http://www.zoominfo.com> and <http://www.jigsaw.com>.

**RSS** -- Originally "RDF Site Summary," but also commonly said to mean "Really Simple Syndication," a standard data format for publishing and syndicating headlines and short content. Usually used for distribution of blog postings. For some examples, go to <http://www.newqator.com>, <http://www.feedburner.com>.

**Social Network Analysis** -- Maps relationships between individuals in social networks. For some examples, go to <http://www.visiblepath.com>, <http://www.tacit.com>.

**Social Network Search Engines** -- A class of search engines that use social network intelligence, filters, and other input to improve search results. For some examples, go to <http://www.newstrove.com>, <http://www.eurekster.com>.

**Social Network Services** -- Social software specifically focused on the building and verifying of

online social networks for whatever purpose. Many social networking services also host blogs. As of 2005, there were more than 300 known social networking Web sites. MySpace, Classmates.com, Facebook, and Friendster are some well-known examples. For some professional examples, go to <http://www.linkedin.com>, <http://www.ecademy.com>.

**Social Network Services Software** -- Software that can be used to start any social network you like — corporate, private, or public. For some examples, go to <http://www.ning.com>, <http://me.com>, and <http://www.huminty.com>.

**Wiki** – A web site that allows visitors to add, remove, edit, and change content, typically without the need for registration. It also allows for linking among any number of pages. This ease of interaction and operation makes a wiki an effective tool for mass collaborative authoring. The term wiki can also refer to the collaborative software itself (wiki engine) that facilitates the operation of such a site or to certain specific wiki sites. For some examples, go to WikiWikiWeb (the original wiki) at <http://c2.com/cgi/wiki>, <http://www.wikipedia.org>.

**Folksonomy** -- A user-generated taxonomy used to categorize and retrieve Web pages, photographs, Web links, and other Web content using open-ended labels called tags. Typically, folksonomies are Internet-based, but their use may occur in other contexts as well. The process of folksonomic tagging is intended to make a body of information increasingly easy to search, discover, and navigate over time. A well-developed folksonomy is ideally accessible as a shared vocabulary both originated by, and familiar to, its primary users. For some examples, go to <http://www.flickr.com>, <http://del.icio.us>.

#### Definition Sources

Online Social Networks, Virtual Communities, Enterprises, and Information Professionals — *Part 1. Past and Present* by Mike Reid, Vice President, Sales and Business Development, Cognition Technologies, Inc. and Christian Gray, Senior Account Executive, Safari Books Online, LLC