

# AN EXAMINATION OF TRUST AMONG MEMBERS OF VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES

連征忠、徐悌,楊凱成

E-mail: 9123220@mail.dyu.edu.tw

## ABSTRACT

Lying ahead is an era of communication where people can communicate with one another anytime and anywhere. Without mutual trust, communication becomes unfruitful. Insufficient trust delays the progress of jobs. All messages can be digitized, but how can trust be digitized? This is a common problem for all walks of life. Therefore, the researcher started from the virtual community in order to find out if the level of trust varies according to the nature of the community. Trust per se is an abstract concept. As a result, the elements of trust have to be determined in order to find out the importance attached to each element. This approach is helpful for the vendors targeting the virtual community as clientele. This research project included 14 graduate students as samples in its first preliminary test in order to correct the ambiguity of the questionnaire, thereby upgrading the clearness and integrity of the survey. 165 questionnaires of the second preliminary test were received, including 162 valid questionnaires. 324 correct questionnaires were received. Finally, 303 valid samples were determined. The researcher analyzed the elements and concluded that the characteristics of the trustee include ability, practice, consistency, benevolence, loyalty, and integrity. Most of the Internet users possess higher education background. The sex and age of the virtual community members are relevant to the level of trust among the virtual community members, whereas the profession and education background are irrelevant. However, the age, education level, and professions of the virtual community members are relevant with one another.

Keywords : virtual community ; trust ; ability ; practice ; consistency ; loyalty ; benevolence ; integrity

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