There are various different kinds of virtual communities which differ in the structure and culture they offer for their users. Both the structures and cultures in online communities are contemporary issues in the study of social media and computer mediated communication. This study is related to one particular virtual community called Paikka auringossa. It is mostly concerned of travelling issues and it is hosted by a Finnish travelling company.

The study is based on a survey questionnaire to which 3419 subjects answered within two weeks in November 2009. The data was gathered in Paikka auringossa-community as a web-based questionnaire. The topic is focused on willingness to disclose personal information, in other words, the willingness to reveal details of the self in the community. Additionally, the elements, thought to have an effect to willingness of self-disclosure were explored.

The data was analyzed using quantitative methods. The details of self-disclosure were analysed into three distinct components by principal component analysis. The effects of basic demographics, experience from social media and the adapted items from technology acceptance model on self-disclosure were investigated with several analysis of variance.

The users of Paikka auringossa –community were most willing to disclose travelling information of themselves. Also, the users felt it was most important to know travelling related information of other users before contacting them. All the chosen elements affected significantly on willingness to disclose information in at least one of the previously mentioned components although the effect sizes were small.

The most central references:

Avainsanat-Nyckelord-Keywords
virtual communities
internet
computer mediated communication
self-disclosure

Muita tietoja-Ovriga uppgifter-Additional information