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SI 529 Assignment #3: Design Claim Related to Newcomers of Commitment

Due at the start of class on Monday, March 9. 1500-2000 words. 15% of overall grade (15 points)

Submit printed copy, double-spaced, stapled. Please also post electronic version as a blog entry, if you are willing for classmates to see it.

This is the first of three assignments in which you will be asked to assess a design claim. You can either formulate your own design claim, and support it with evidence from the community your are studying, or assess one of the design claims found in the readings or lecture notes or a classmate's blog post or online comment (be sure to attribute the source, and quote if you are quoting exactly). You should choose just one design claim, related to attracting, selecting, or integrating newcomers, or instilling commitment to the community.

Recall that a design claim takes one of the following formats:

- stand-alone: alternative X helps/hinders achievement of goal Y under conditions Z
- comparative between alternatives: alternative X1 is more effective than X2 at achieving goal Y under conditions Z
- comparative between contexts: alternative X helps/hinders achievement of goal Y more under conditions Z1 than Z2

Your assignment should include information about the following:

1. The goal (3 points):

- What goal does the design accomplish or fail to accomplish? (Focus on just one main goal.)
- How does/would the community benefit from achieving the goal? It is likely that the community contains many different stakeholders and achieving the goal would likely benefit some but not others. Be sure to identify the different stakeholders and how achieving the goal would impact them.

2. The design alternative (5 points):
We would like you to focus on one design/feature that is already in existence in the online community. It could be a technical feature, a social feature such as a norm or a ritual, or some combination of the two. You can pick something that is working well or something that is not working well.

- What is the feature you are identifying? (Focus on one main design alternative.)
- Why is it reasonable to expect that it will or will not help achieve the goal? Reference course readings or folk wisdom as appropriate.
- How has this design alternative worked so far in the community? Offer anecdotes or data that support your assessment.

- If it's not working as well as it could, say how the community could improve upon the current design for achieving the goal.

3. The contexts (4 points):

- Name and describe one characteristic about your community that enables the design in achieving the goal. Explain. AND/OR Name one characteristic about your community that undermines the design in achieving the goal. Explain.
- Name and describe one characteristic of another online community that would increase the effectiveness of the design. Explain. AND/OR Name one characteristic of another online community that would undermine the effectiveness of the design. Explain.

If your paper is assessing a design claim proposed by someone else, and you find something other than perfect support for that design claim from sections 2 and 3, state a revised design claim, in one of the three allowed formats above, that is consistent with the argument you've made in your paper. For example, you might add an additional clause to the context conditions that limits the scope of a claim (e.g., only holds if all the community members are left-handed). If you are formulating a new design claim, then presumably you will have formulated it in the first place so that the arguments you have made in the paper support your original formulation, and a restatement is not necessary.

In addition, there will be 3 points allocated for clarity, grammar, and style.

If you haven't managed to formulate a design claim in one of the allowed formats, or you're not sure what it would mean to do so, you should contact the GSI or professor before you hand this paper in. It's not possible to do well on this assignment unless you're following that format.