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Assignment #6: Community Startup Plan

Due Monday, April 27, by 1PM. (Note: we do not have class that day).

1500-2000 words. Please include your name, mailbox #, and word count. Please print double-spaced, and submit to TBA. Please post electronic version as a blog entry, if you are willing to share it with classmates.

In this assignment, you are asked to prepare a startup plan for a new online community. It could be a competitor to the community you studied for the semester, or a community of an entirely different sort.

Your paper should include a brief description of the purpose and intended audience for the community. (3 points)

Then, describe how participants will gain value from the community once the community has succeeded. In particular, to what extent does the value depend on the presence of other people, on the presence of particular kinds of information, and the presence of particular technological features? Are there network effects? If so, is there a winner-take-all competition with other online communities? What is the minimum community size (approximately) to achieve "critical mass"? (3 points)

Finally, describe steps that you would take to get the word out, attract the right people, and make them want to stay in the early stages of the community's growth. Where appropriate, frame your plans in terms of the design claims in the community startup chapter. (6 points)

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