

The virtual community by rheingold

Sociology



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There are many examples of virtual communities that serve different purposes and target different segments. For instance, for independent contractors and consultants, About.com is a key example of a virtual community that can be utilized to assist a distributed workforce. This community provides discussion platforms, online training, and other resource areas for assistance. Moreover, another example of a virtual community is BlackPlanet.com, which specifically caters to African American society. It allows the Black minority to interact, by offering email, free personal pages, chat rooms, forums, news, instant messaging, and Internet telephony, as well as online events and special promotions. Furthermore, this community features online channels that cover a variety of topics, like career, health, money, politics, news, music, beauty, love, sex, and spirituality, etc.; it also has a 'Black Expressions' book club (McKay 2000, p. 157).

Virtual communities go far and beyond to cover all segments, for example, for gaming and play station lovers, Sony's Play Station Network (PSN) is a primary example, which keeps the players stay connected through online multiplayer games, tournaments, and competitions, PlayStation Store, and forums where users can create and share content with other members of the PSN. Users can even share text as well as audio and video messages with friends and family. This community also allows members to enjoy downloads on PlayStation Portable (PSP) and PlayStation 3 (PS3). Moreover, the network conducts different events, general discussions, and forum games, as well as music, videos, photos, comics, and network technical solutions, etc. (PlayStation Network Explained, 2010).

Virtual communities, besides serving other groups of people, do not miss out on kids' interests. Millsberry.com is an example of a virtual community for
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kids, where kids can make friends, play games, win prizes, design a home, shop, surf, and learn a lot. Kids can participate in discussion forums, post polls, share pictures and do a lot of stuff. Besides this, there are also health-related virtual communities; an example is the Le Club, which is a virtual community for women of all ages and backgrounds, focusing on their health and fitness. Members can participate in discussions, share personal stories, and seek health advice, etc. (womenshealthmatters. ca, 2010).

Other social networking communities include Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter, which are the most common virtual communities at present.