

# Communities - Flocks - Crowds

Contributed by System Administrator

## The Architecture of Social Participation

There is a shift occurring towards empowered communities of users playing active roles in the development and innovation of the services they use. Others who clearly had experience building and developing communities spoke of serving the community, welcoming new community members and the importance of authentic conversations leading to organic growth as the model for success. This can be characterized by open communication, decentralization of authority, an enhanced freedom to share tasks and ideas. New communications technologies are democratizing the creation of value, not just in terms of groups of content-creators sharing a common interest but all the way to development using crowdsourcing. There is almost a chaotic nature to content-creation on the web as it is resulting in many more implicitly-defined communities. Often times the information is far more up to date than if created by a traditionally organized and funded source. Groups of individuals will flock around subjects or issues that are relevant to the current interests or needs. Often one will start out as a Lurker, then as they become comfortable will begin to participate in discussions. Some will leave behind a vast wealth of knowledge. Eventually this community will unofficially appoint the authoritative leaders based on consensus. This organic method of growth and self-policing actually seems to work well, at least as well if not better than a highly controlled environment. An individual can decide whether or not they are in agreement with a particular consensus and either move on or call it home.