Like Text to Likes: Diffusion-Networks in Mobile Communication

Sebastian Schnorf

sebastian.schnorf@swisscom.com

Abstract:

In modern information society relationships are increasingly maintained by mobile communication services (Ling 2004). This contribution examines social networks as they are reproduced by the usage of mobile phones. On the basis of anonymous transaction data of a school class and their communication peers, the qualities of those networks are described. Further analysis examines in what way these characteristics influence the diffusion of new services, like for example Multimedia Messaging Services or Mobile Internet applications.

Results of the social network analysis point at a homogeneous composition, individually distinctive and dynamic qualities of the personal networks. Adopters and Non-Adopters show differences regarding those characteristics. Supplementary to the data analysis and explication of anomalies qualitative interviews were conducted with a sample of individuals. This methodical approach clarifies the connections between "face-to-face"- and mobile communication network (see also Wellman/Tindall 1993; Smoreda/Thomas 2001). The statements indicate that the social structure of mobile communication has potential to explain individual adoption behavior.

Sebastian Schnorf does user research at Swisscom, national telecom operator in Switzerland. He is currently graduating in media and communication science at University of Zürich.