ABSTRACT

Making of: trust within an online community of hackers.

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This presentation aims to understand how trust is established and distributed in an online community of hackers, which includes more than 2.5 million members. The use of a mixed methodology enables a holistic consideration of underlying processes for establishing confidence in illicit anonymous environment. Through content analysis of almost 450,000 interactions between members, that resulted in the awarding of reputation points, this paper examines the levels of trust between hackers, the evolution of trust and distrust in time, the links between trust and hierarchical status within the community, as well as the reasons why hackers accumulate or lose their peers' trust. The results suggest that despite the importance granted to values of cooperation, sharing of knowledge and technical skills, personal relationships within the forum (positive and negative) prevail to determine the reputation and trustworthiness of members.