A Study on the Trends of Social Q&A Curation Services

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1. Introduction

In response to the flood of information, social curation services have emerged as ways of accessing selected contents. The social curation service is a collaborative sharing of web contents organized around one or more particular themes or topics. This service model complements the disadvantage of existing services of social networks, but it is not much different in terms of the platform. People play a leading role in information filtering. The social curation service is the activities adding quality of subjects to information. It filters and links information in a socially enhanced way around a specific theme. There are different kinds of social curation service models. In 'Pinterest' service, users select and share the images. Some bloggers select news stories and communicate them through SNS and URLs. In the 'iamday' service, pictures can be shared. Users ask questions and get answers in social question and answer (Q&A) curation service. Social Q&A curation services provide a platform for users to assist one another by sharing information. Users can obtain filtered content. 'Quora', 'KOSEN(Korean Scientists and Engineers Network) What is?', 'Konwledge-iN', 'Yahoo Answers', 'Askville', and 'Answerbag' are the popular Social Q&A curation services. This paper examines the important characteristics of Quora and 'KOSEN what is?' as representatives of social Q&A curation services. This study will provide basic information for development of the future social Q&A curation service models.

2. Methods

Literature on social Q&A curation services is reviewed, and the popular social Q&A curation services are listed. As representatives of the services, Quora and 'KOSEN what is?' are selected and analyzed.

3. Social Q&A Curation Services

Some of social Q&A curation services are listed in Table 1. Yahoo Answers is the most popular among the social Q&A services. Quora uses wiki formats. Knowledge-iN (Ji-Sik-In) is the first service of this kind in Korea. 'KOSEN What is?' is the representative social Q&A curation service in Korea.

[Table 1] Social Q&A Curation Services[1]

Service	URL	Note
Quora	http://www.quora.com	Hybrid SQA/wiki format
KOSEN What is?	http://www.kosen21.org/work/02_knowledgeK/	ST Q&A Service on web managed by KISTI
Knowledge-iN	http://kin.naver.com	Also called Ji-Sik-In, first SQA site in Korean
Yahoo! Answers	http://answers.yahoo.com	Most popular SQA site
Askville	http://askville.amazon.com	Owned by Amazon.com
Answerbag	http://www.answerbag.com	First US SQA site
Fluther	http://www.fluther.com	Fluther Acquired by Twitter in 2010
AnswerBank	http://www.theanswerbank.co.uk	UK-centric SQA with quizzes, polls
Answerly	http://www.answerly.com	SQA metasearch site

4. Quora and KOSEN What Is?

Quora's mission is to share and improve the world's knowledge. It is a successful social Q&A curation service on a website. The users in the Quora community can ask and answer questions, comment to answers, edit questions, and collect questions and answers according to topics. Users can also follow other users and topics. Figure 1 shows the structure of questions, the topics discussed and the users who discuss them in Quora. Quora users are supposed to use

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[1] Rich Gazan, "Social Q&A", Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 2011, 62(12), pp. 2303(modified the table).<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/asi.21562/pdf>

their real names and biography. Users get credit when they answer questions. Some users can become reviewers and administrators who evaluate and delete irrelevant questions and answers. Barack Obama, the President of United States, recently answered a question on Quora.
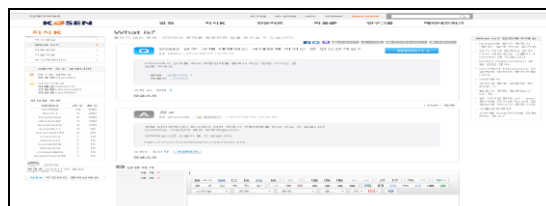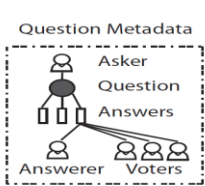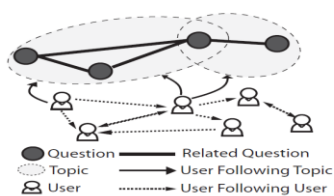

Figure 1. Structure of Questions, Topics, and Users in Quora[2]   Figure 2. Q&A on KOSEN What is?

'KOSEN What is?' is also a web based question and answer curation service managed by the Korea Institute of Science and Technology Information (KISTI) (Figure 2). Users ask questions, give answers, and get recommendations. Users get credit as mileage when they give answers. Most users are scientists and engineers who are qualified in their fields. Answers are curated by experts. The questions and answers are deposited and exchanged among researchers. Knowledge exchange is crucial for R&D researchers.

5. Results

Quora in the United States and 'KOSEN What is?' in Korea are successful social Q&A curation services. Both of them rely on experts who can curate Q&A. Thanks to the quality control by the experts, users can get correct and reliable information. Getting other users' evaluations via the recommendation function is another important factor. Rewards for contributions are also important to the success of the service. Quora uses SNS service for logging in and for evaluation. Quora has the following user and topic functions, but 'KOSEN What is?' does not have such functions. Quora deals with all subjects, but 'KOSEN What is?' is more focused on science and technology. The users and the contents of 'KOSEN What is?' are more research oriented than those of Quora. Both of the services face a common challenge of keeping answers relevant to topics and making it easy for users to avoid less relevant contents.

6. Suggestions

Scientists and engineers need knowledge to create and conduct research. Social Q&A curation services such as 'Quora' and 'KOSEN What is?' will meet the users' needs for reliable tacit knowledge. For better service, social Q&A curation services need to have qualified experts for filtering questions and answers. If reference librarians join these social Q&A curation services, they will contribute to improvement the services. An easy-to-use system and User interface will also become important factors for the long-term success of the services. Implementation of mobile service, improved speed of answering, participation of users, and rewards for participation will help develop the services further. Social Q&A curation services are contributing to the improvement of the collective intelligence of the humankind.

7. References

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[3] S. C. Rosenbaum. Curation nation, book, McGraw-Hill, New York, c2011.

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[2] G. Wang et al, "Wisdom in social crowd : an analysis of quora", Proceedings of the 22nd international conference on World Wide Web pages, 2013, p.1342