VU VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM

ORGANIZING ECOSYSTEMS FOR DIGITAL INNOVATION

This dissertation deepens our understanding of how organizations can innovate with digital technology in ecosystems of heterogeneous actors. Digital innovation offers exciting new opportunities for product and service design, but also brings about new organization challenges. By adopting a qualitative process research methodology, I show how ecosystem members can manage interdependent efforts during different stages of ecosystem development (creation, growth and maintenance). Through a field study on a smart city initiative I unpack how ecosystem members perform temporal coordination. Based on a second field study on the Philips Hue connected light platform, I zoom in on the role of complementors, i.e. independent actors who develop complementary products and services. The findings of this study show that these complementors also create connections between digital product platforms, resulting in an 'ecology of platforms', with far-reaching consequences. Furthermore, the study on the Philips Hue ecosystem addresses the importance of ensuring complement quality over time to maintain the overall integrity of the system, and shows that this the result of a complex interplay between platform owner, third-party developer and end-users for the necessary maintenance work. Next to novel theoretical contributions, this dissertation offers practical implications for managers in the field of digital innovation.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Susan Hilbolling has done her PhD at the KIN Research Group at the VU University Amsterdam. She has a Master of Science in Strategic Product Design from Delft University of Technology and a bachelor's degree in Industrial Design Engineering from the University of Twente. Susan is passionate about new digital technology and product design. Her research interests include interorganizational collaboration, digital and open innovation, and (qualitative) process research. As of January 2019 she will start working as a postdoctoral researcher at Aarhus University.

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