Title: Another dime in the jukebox? A study of motivators of prosocial behavior to support online music*

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Abstract:

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Understanding users motivations to pay for digital goods is becoming increasingly important in a context where individuals are able to consume such goods for free. This study looks at the impact of building an online community to stimulate consumers pro-social behavior to support providers of digital goods. Drawing from prior research showing that members of an online community are motivated by both altruism and self-interest when making a decision to contribute to a site, we use a survey-based experiment to identify specific factors that impact a users payment decision in a pay-what-you-want pricing scheme. We study the impact of these factors in the context of online music. In this context, we operationalize altruism as the consumers decision to allocate a share of their payment to artists and to charity in supporting the music they acquire. Self-interest motivation is about the consumers reputation that can be shown through their decision to display or not to other members their payment for the music, as well as through gaining status through a system recognizing participation in the community. Results of our conjoint analysis demonstrate that both altruism and self-interest play a role in a consumers decision to pay for digital goods. The most important factor in the payment decision is the inclusion of a charitable partner in the distribution of revenues while consumers were also willing to pay more for artists that are not well-established, supporting the role of both altruistic motivation factors. Results also reveal that one self-oriented motivation factor -status building - increases willingness to pay but displaying a users payment does not. Altogether, this study provides important implications for online music providers, as well as for artists operating in the current music environment by highlighting the importance of building an online community around the acquisition of digital goods. It provides an important step towards understanding
what drives consumers to pay for music, a good that can also be found for free.

*with Jui Ramaprasad and Rimi Desmeules

Biodata:

Genevieve Bassellier is Associate Professor at the Desautels Faculty of Management, McGill University, Montreal, Canada. She received her Ph.D. from the University of British Columbia. Her main stream of research explores the role of knowledge and emotions in IT projects, virtual teams, and IT-related decision making in adoption and post-adoption contexts. She also works on the role of top management in strategic initiatives as well as on the role of social media in the transformation of digital good industry. She is currently an associate editor for MIS Quarterly. Her work has been published in Information Systems Research, MIS Quarterly, the Journal of Management Information Systems, and the Journal of AIS.