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Motivating Contributions to Public Information Goods: A Personalized Field Experiment on Wikipedia

Abstract:

We use a large-scale personalized field experiment on Wikipedia to examine the effect of motivation on the contributions of domain experts to public information goods. Experts are 13% more interested in contributing when we mention the private benefit of contribution, such as the likely citation of their work, together with the social impact of the public good. More importantly, we find that greater matching accuracy between a recommended Wikipedia article and an expert's paper abstract increases both contribution quantity and quality. Our results show the potential of scalable personalized interventions using recommender systems to study drivers of prosocial behavior.

(Joint work with Rosta Farza, Robert Kraut, Iman YeckehZaare, Ark Fangzhou Zhang)