

Call for Papers

Prosumer Revisited: The Actuality of Prosumer Research State of the art and future perspectives

Location: Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt/M.

Time: 26./27. März 2009

Organisation:

Prof. Dr. Birgit Blättel-Mink, Frankfurt/M.

PD Dr. Kai-Uwe Hellmann, Berlin

As Günter G. Voß and Kerstin Rieder showed in their study "The Working Customer. If Consumers become unpaid Employees" (2005) customers participate more often than ever finishing the functions of goods and services by own contributions which lied originally in the only responsibility of the producers. For instances concerning online banking, booking travel journeys, buying books, downloading music: Most of what internet economy does today includes inevitably the more or less pro-active collaboration of the customers.

However this development did not start with the internet economy primarily. In fact we can observe this phenomenon much earlier concerning the completion of consumer goods and services. Think on the automatic restaurants at the end of the 19th century, the emergence of self service retailing in the Twenties, the global spreading of fast food in the Fifties, the "Do it yourself"-movement in the furnishing industry in the Seventies, headed by IKEA as its international most successful flagship. Also here the realization and quality of the concrete product or service depends substantially on the fact that the customers have to invest their own time, knowledge and even relationships to assist the producers regarding the right performance and applicability of their products and services – for example building the Billy bookshelf or clearing away the rests of a Hamburger menu.

Looking at classical research features concerning this pro-active part of consumers one author is above all well known for his contribution: Alvin Toffler who invented the term "Prosumer" 1980. Originally Toffler understood the prosumer as a consumer who does not only buy goods and services but produces some of them by himself at home, in his leisure time, e.g. employed-free time. Today the term "producer" is more orientated on a kind of division of labour: one part of the product – half or more prepared – comes from the producer, the rest has to be contributed by the consumer and for that reason the consumer becomes both: producer and consumer in one person called the prosumer.

The conference "Prosumer Revisited: The Actuality of Prosumer Research. State of the art and future perspectives" will focus on the one hand on the momentary situation in this field of research and on the other hand on the empirical practices of presuming in real markets. Starting with Tofflers original concept of the "Prosumer" the conference tries to make up the balance of the actual relevance of the Prosumer debate in theory and practice including trends, tendencies and new inventions.

Invited are different scientific disciplines like sociology, cultural anthropology, economics, history, psychology etc. as well as representatives out of the field of social science and the field of economical practice. The conference language will be probably English.

Abstracts should be not longer than two pages to be send by email till the **31st October** to

Prof. Blättel-Mink (b.blaettel-mink@soz.uni-frankfurt.de) or

Dr. Hellmann (kai-uwe.hellmann@gmx.de).

The selection will be done in November.

The conference will be supported by ebay Deutschland.