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> ICOR

**RESEARCH
SEMINAR**



EMPOWERING CHANGEMAKERS FOR A BETTER SOCIETY

“GOVERN LESS TO GOVERN MORE? AUTONOMY -CONTROL TENSIONS IN FIRM-HOSTED ONLINE COMMUNITIES”

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ABSTRACT

In the digital age, it has never been so easy for customers to express themselves and share their experience on a massive scale. In particular, online communities (OCs) revert classic power relations through the production of discourse, information, and knowledge on organizations by consumers themselves, and, thus, renew power-knowledge relations between organizations and their consumers. In this context, organizations have tried more or less covert interventions in autonomous OCs attempting to regain control over conversations that their consumers are having about them, but without them. An increasing number of organizations have engaged in designing their own OCs, called firm-sponsored online communities. Through a case study built on a netnographic approach of PMU, the French leader in sports betting, the Foucauldian approach of governmentality helps us understand the design and structuration processes of a FHOC. Our study reveals that to structure a favorable milieu, it is necessary to balance the organizational need to (1) control the autonomy of consumers by designing the rules of interactions with the preservation of the (2) autonomy of control that consumers enjoy in OCs.