

Abstract:

We gather under the term “*approval*” a host of online acts, such as Liking, Favourit- ing, Sharing or Wishlisting, which express a positive attitude towards an item, but do not quite amount to choice meant as a final selection. With items presented as a *list*, we propose a general model of approval and we completely characterise it in terms of simple properties of observed approval data. We also show that the psychological primitives leading to approval are substantially identifiable from observed behaviour. Finally, we introduce and explore the notion of “list design” to capture situations where an interested party can manipulate the approver’s behaviour by choosing the list with the aim of maximising an objective.