

# User Innovation Research Initiative



The User Innovation Research Initiative is a research program which aims to deepen our understanding of the phenomenon of user innovation and is hosted by the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the Vienna University of Economics & Business.

*(User Innovation Initiative Logo created by Peter Vandro)*

## THE PHENOMENON: MANY USERS INNOVATE

Nearly three decades of research into the sources of innovation, pioneered and still driven by Eric von Hippel (MIT), has revealed that users can be surprisingly creative and innovative. In many cases, the users themselves – and not manufacturers – are the originators of new products and services.

- Empirical studies, for example in the fields of computers, petroleum processing, the semiconductor industry and many sports industries like snowboarding, windsurfing, or kayaking have shown that the most important innovations in the evolution of industries were originated by users.
- User innovation is not a rare occurrence. The share of user innovators in the fields studied to date range from 10% (outdoor consumer products) to almost 40% (extreme sporting communities).
- The advent of the internet has propelled user innovativeness, as it is now much easier for users to interact with other users. The results of such global user networks and communities include open source software or Wikipedia, to name just two examples.

Companies and academics alike are increasingly searching for ways to reclaim the territory of user innovation for innovation management and product development.

Some User Innovations:



Mountainbike    Open Source Software Linux    Semiconductor Industry    Petroleum Processing

## THE FOCUS THEMES

The User Innovation Research Initiative aims to deepen our understanding of the phenomenon of user innovation. We search for patterns and mechanisms and, building on our insights, develop and improve practical methods in order to harness user innovativeness for companies. Our research is organized in four areas:

## INITIATIVE LEADER



Nikolaus Franke  
[WU Vienna](#)



Christopher Lettl  
[WU Vienna](#)

## INITIATIVE MANAGER



Katharina Braun  
[WU Vienna](#)  
*(for the area of research in User Communities)*



Ulrike Kaiser  
[WU Vienna](#)  
*(for the area of Toolkit research)*



Susanne Roiser  
WU Vienna  
*(for the area of Lead User research)*

## INTEREST IN COLLABORATION?

We are highly interested in collaborating with scholars as well as practitioners with an interest in one of the focus areas of our User Innovation Research Initiative.

- **For scholars:** If you are interested in sharing your ideas, discussing and presenting your work, or launching joint projects please feel free to contact Nikolaus Franke ([nikolaus.franke@wu-wien.ac.at](mailto:nikolaus.franke@wu-wien.ac.at)) or one of the initiative managers (see side bar) for further information.
- **For practitioners:** If you are interested in collaborating with or sponsoring the User Innovation Research Initiative group, there are many different ways to do so. Please feel free to contact either Nikolaus Franke ([nikolaus.franke@wu-wien.ac.at](mailto:nikolaus.franke@wu-wien.ac.at)) or one of the initiative managers (see side bar) for further information.

## INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH PARTNERS



Eric von Hippel  
MIT Sloan

## OUTSTANDING USER INNOVATION RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP

Outstanding international researchers who want to visit and collaborate with the User Innovation Research Initiative group in Vienna are provided with office space and can apply for the 'Outstanding User Innovation Research Scholarship' in order to facilitate their stay.



Christian Luthje  
TU Hamburg-Harburg

## FURTHER RELEVANT LINKS

A 'cornerstone' book about user innovation is 'Democratizing Innovation' by Prof. Eric von Hippel (MIT). A free download is available at: <http://web.mit.edu/evhippel/www/books.htm>

A collection of relevant research papers on user innovation is available at: <http://userinnovation.mit.edu/>

A collection of research papers on the phenomenon of open source software (innovative user communities) is available at: <http://opensource.mit.edu/>

A good website on mass customization (in German) is



Frank Piller  
RWTH Aachen



Cornelius Herstatt  
TU Hamburg-Harburg

[www.mass-customization.de](http://www.mass-customization.de)

A good website on open innovation (in German) is  
[www.openinnovators.de](http://www.openinnovators.de)



Sonali K. Shah  
[University of Washington](#)



Karim R. Lakhani



Marion Pötz  
[Copenhagen Business School](#)



Reinhard Prügl  
[Zeppelin Universität Friedrichshafen](#)

---

## THE VIENNA TEAM



[Univ. Prof. Dr. Nikolaus Franke](#)



[Univ. Prof. Dr. Christopher Lettl](#)



Mag.a Julia Bauer



Mag.a Katharina Braun



Dr. Thomas Funke



Dr. Ulrike Kaiser



Dr. Peter Keinz



Mag.a Ilse-Maria Klanner



Dipl. Wirt. Ing. Thorsten Lambertus



Mag.a Nadine Moser



Mag. Stefan Perkmann Berger, M.Econ



Mag. Susanne Roiser, M.A.



Mag. Florian Schirg



Dr. Philipp Türtscher



Mag. Peter Vandor, MIM (CEMS)