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**Code begets community: On social and technical  
aspects of managing avirtual community**

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**Abstract**

What is reality beyond the hype of virtual communities on the Internet? This Ph.D. thesis is based on three and a half years of studies in a Swedish-speaking adventure mud - a text-based virtual reality system. The focus is not primarily on the players, but on the administrators and on the work to make this virtual community work.

A point of departure is that that SvenskMud can be seen as many things at the same time: a game, a computer program and a hobby. SvenskMud is an expression of a partisan, grass-roots initiative. It is not endorsed or supported by a powerful organization. All work is voluntary and unpaid and all usage is free. The values that SvenskMud endorse are the values of its creators and guardians - not of vendors who try to please an audience at any cost.

An important characteristic of virtual communities is that social concerns become difficult to separate from technical practices. Social and technical issues interact and co-evolve in such intimate ways that they often merge in a mud. Management of the social system is done through computer code. During specific and favorable conditions, such computer code can indeed beget community. It is these circumstances that this work attempts to elucidate.

*Keywords: Mud, community, virtual community, virtual environments, adventure muds , game, hobby, hackers, open source, software engineering*

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