Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Science

of

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BSc (University of Reading, 2012)

“An Exploration of Emergent Contributors Within IBM Collaborative Lifecycle Management Ecosystem”

Department of Computer Science

Tuesday, August 11, 2015
11:00 A.M.
Engineering and Computer Science Building
Room 548

Supervisory Committee:
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Dr. Eric Knauss, Department of Computer Science, UVic (Co-Supervisor)

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Prof. Joan MacLeod, Department of Writing, UVic
Abstract

Today, software ecosystems have become transparent, allowing users to submit issue reports and new feature requests to the development team. The more permeable boundaries of ecosystems provide an open culture paradigm where stakeholders, customers, developers and other user groups have the access to participate during requirements management. One example of this open culture in software ecosystems is found in work item discussions, which are aimed to improve how requirements are elicited, analyzed and validated. In this thesis, we investigate who participates in requirements discussions, identifying and focusing on emergent contributors; discussants that are not officially part of the development team or required to participate, but contribute to work item discussions. We report form a case study of online requirement discussion in IBM’s software product ecosystem. We find that external contributors emerge frequently during discussions and that they mediate the clarification of requirements. Our results indicate that it is important for emergent contributors to be involved early in the requirements process, otherwise there is a negative effect on the work items’ progress. We discuss the implications of our findings for practitioners and suggest directions for future studies.