

## **Hub of All things: Creating a Shared Purpose Service Ecosystem**

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There are many notable multi-sided platforms (MSPs) such as Facebook, iPhone, Google and Android operating systems. These platforms contain technologies, physical objects or services enabling direct interactions between two or more groups of participants and becoming a foundation upon which a large number of firms or developers develop complementary offerings. These loosely assembled firms and developers form an industrial ecosystem around these platforms (Gawer, 2012, p.12). The objective of these MSPs is to achieve network effects created as the number of firms or developers on the platforms increase, resulting in the building of increasingly complex and sophisticated offerings more effectively. The challenge is how to develop the industrial service ecosystems around the platform in the first place.

Moore (2013) proposes a new vision for business ecosystems, based on a connected community (an informal society of individuals and companies) with shared purpose. Shared purpose entails a few standards, core and other complementary technologies; shared business practices and a set of values such as openness of ideas, treating each other well, finding creative ways of profit sharing and risk mitigation for all members to succeed. In a similar vein, Taillard, Peters, Pel and Mele (2016) introduced the notion of shared intentionality, an aspect of collective agency, to offer a new understanding of service ecosystem formation. The sharing of intentions could foster interdependence among actors and thus drive the emergence of service ecosystems.

This paper presents an investigation into the building of the Hub-of-all-Things (HAT) ecosystem as it moves from design into the live commercial environment. We report on data released by HATDeX on how the HAT foundation facilitated the notion of shared purpose and the development of shared intentions (Moore, 2013; Taillard, et al, 2016), combining it with first person participatory action research report (Reason and Bradbury, 2001). With clear standards (technology, privacy) for personal data and development of the core technology for services, The HAT foundation holds a strong belief in a hybrid of open source and commercial solutions, championing personal data empowerment, control, privacy and innovation. The HAT foundation has been communicating these shared purposes through newsletters, updates, Indiegogo movement and through social media, awareness campaigning, to attract members to the community, including researchers, firms, developers and community members. Believing in co-creation and collaboration, the HAT foundation has also been developing applications for consumers on the HAT. Our study reveals the scale of the challenge in growing a service ecosystem on the Internet, and the strategies employed by the foundation. We contribute to the design of multi-sided platforms and the service ecosystem literature and provide practical guidance for startups in the digital era.