Jams as emerging practice of innovation communities: 
The case of the Global Service Jam 2011

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Abstract: Jams, initially coined in the domain of Jazz music, are nowadays 
applied by various institutions as practice of innovation communities. Jams help to 
gather and strengthen the community and allow for seamless knowledge transfer to 
develop innovative concepts. Yet, the body of academic literature on jams is 
rudimentarily established and lacks a comprehensive understanding for this 
specific innovation practice. To close this gap, we investigate the Global Service 
Jam 2011 (GSJ11) as an emerging practice of innovation communities, which ran 
48 hours from 11 to 13 March. Within this short time frame 1263 voluntary 
jammer, globally dispersed in 59 locations, created 203 innovative service 
concepts. This paper investigates and reports on an ongoing in-depth case study of 
the GSJ11: first, by presenting background information on jams, especially from 
the more well-known area as corporate practice, second, by depicting the special 
set-up of the GSJ11, and third, by discussion the uniqueness of this jam event, its 
results as well as prospects for subsequent analysis.