The defense of his thesis “Mining, Analyzing and Exploiting Community Feedback on The Web” took place on the 13th of October 2014. The PhD committee consisted of Prof. W. Nejdl, Asst. Prof. I.S. Altingövde, Prof. H. Vollmer and was chaired by Prof. K. Schneider.

The first part of the thesis provides an in-depth analysis of comment-centric feedback in real-world datasets crawled from top content providers, covering different types of social media with different underlying feedback behavior. The research here explored the applicability of machine learning and data mining techniques to predict the acceptance of comments, comments likely to trigger discussions, controversial comments, and users exhibiting offensive commenting behavior.

In addition to commenting, rating and replying comments, Web 2.0 platforms provide additional means for the users to interact with the content (e.g., via likes, dislikes, favorites). This results in a vast amount of social feedback available for the multimedia content shared through the Web 2.0 platforms. However, the potential of such social features associated with shared content still remained unexplored in the context of information retrieval. In the second part of the thesis, the focus was on investigating the impact of social features on the effectiveness of video retrieval in YouTube using state-of-the-art learning to rank techniques. The experiments revealed that social features are promising and can improve the retrieval performance for videos in YouTube.

Finally, the work in this thesis studied implicit feedback on the web, namely community sentiment in Web queries. The objective here was to analyze and exploit Web queries as a new, rich and mostly unexplored source of user-generated content that can convey community views and opinions on a multitude of controversial topics.

**Sergiu Chelaru: Successful PhD Graduation**