Customer Interface - Part 1

CPS 181s
Sept 20, 2001

Overview of Customer Interface

- Technology-mediated customer interface
- Shift to “screen-to-face” interface
- Types of interfaces available
- “Look-and-feel” of the website
- Commerce activities
- Communities in the business model
- 7Cs framework

Questions

- What are the seven design elements to the customer interface?
- What are the alternative “look-and-feel” approaches to design?
- What are the five content archetypes?
- Why be concerned with community?
- What are the levers used to customize a site?
- What types of communication can a firm maintain with its customer base?
- How does a firm connect with other businesses?
- What are alternative pricing models of commerce archetypes?

Seven Design Elements

- The 7Cs Framework for customer design
- Interface is the virtual interface
- Worth visiting?
- What products or services?
- What messages does it communicate: exclusivity, low price, or ease of use?

Definitions and Simple Illustrations

- Context – aesthetic and functional look and feel
- Content – digital subject matter such as text, video, audio, graphics
- Community – interaction between users
- Customization – tailor itself or be tailored by user
- Communication – dialogue between site and users
- Connection – formal linkages between sites
- Commerce – sale of goods, products services on site
The 7Cs of the Customer Interface

- **Context**: Site’s layout and design
- **Commerce**: Site’s capabilities to enable commercial transactions
- **Connection**: Degree site is linked to other sites
- **Communication**: The ways sites enable site-to-user communication or two-way communication
- **Customization**: Site’s ability to self-tailor to different users or to allow users to personalize the site
- **Community**: The ways sites enable user-to-user communication
- **Content**: Text, pictures, sound and video that web pages contain

Building Fit and Reinforcement

- **Fit**: extent each of 7Cs individually support the business model
- **Reinforcement**: aesthetic context of the site

Fit and Reinforcement of Cs

- **Business Model**

Dimensions to Context

- **Function**
  - Organized into sets of pages
  - Provides means to navigate through pages
  - Section breakdown
  - Linking structure
  - Navigation tools
  - Performance dimensions
    - Speed – site page
    - Reliability – lack of downtime
    - Platform independence
    - Media accessibility – download in various platforms
    - Usability – navigation ease

Look-and-Feel of the Design

- **Context**
  - Look and feel of a screen-to-face customer interface
  - Includes website, PDA, cell phone

Performance of Lands’ End Site
Aesthetic and Tips

Aesthetic
- Color scheme
- Visual themes

Usability Tips and Tricks
- Quick
- Easy
- Search capability
- Get outside opinion
- Clear categories
- Clear product names

Form vs. Function — The Design Context

Frontier

Aesthetic Example — KMGI.com

Context Archetypes
- Broad, generic approaches to context design
- New technologies introduce new techniques, introduce new aesthetics
- Aesthetically dominant – look-and-feel, high form, low function
- Functionally dominant – low form, high function
- Integrated - balance of form and function

Functional Dominant — Brint.com

Integrated Approach Example — Patagonia.com
Point-Counterpoint: Form vs. Function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can Maximize Both</th>
<th>Cannot Maximize Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology makes tradeoff irrelevant</td>
<td>Inherent tradeoffs in design choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case studies of firms that do both (Reflex.com)</td>
<td>Firms should focus on one dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More pleasing to customers when both are accomplished</td>
<td>Segments gravitate toward one dimension</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Five Content Archetypes

- Content
  - Dimensions to Content
  - Offering mix – product, information, and/or services
  - Appeal mix – promotional and communication messaging
  - Multimedia mix – text, audio, image, video, and graphics choices
  - Content type – time-sensitivity

Offering-dominant – information, but may have entertainment
Market-dominant – market for buyers and sellers

A Framework to Understand Offering-Dominating Archetypes

Superstore Example — Amazon.com
Category Killer Example — Petsmart.com
Specialty Store Example — Frontgate.com

Market Dominant Example — PlasticsNet.com

Drill Down - Content Archetypes vs. Offering Types

Point-Counterpoint: Is Content King?

A Community

- A feeling of membership
- Strong sense of involvement
- User-to-user communication
Elements of a Community

- Cohesion
- Effectiveness
- Help
- Relationship
- Language
- Self-regulation

Types of Communities

- Just friends
- Enthusiasts
- Friends in need
- Players
- Traders

Degree of Member Participation

- Passive
- Active
- Motivated
- Caretakers

Member Benefits

- Need fulfillment
- Inclusion
- Mutual influence
- Shared emotional experience

Dimensions of Community

- Interactive community
  - Chat
  - Instant messaging
  - Message boards
  - Member-to-member e-mail

- Noninteractive communication
  - Public member webpages
  - Member content

Communities — Elements, Types, and Benefits

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<th>Member Outcomes: Participation and Benefits</th>
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Community Archetypes

- Bazaar – wander but not interact
- Theme park – finite number of areas organized by categories and subcategories
- Club – highly focused on only one areas of interest, promoting interaction among members
- Shrine – highly focused community with minimal interaction
- Theatre – focused in area but allows for moderate interaction
- Café – focused on common area of interest but provides considerable interaction among members
Design Examples

- Nexiv  [http://www.nexiv.com](http://www.nexiv.com)
- Barneys  [http://www.barneys.com](http://www.barneys.com)
- Megacar  [http://www.megacar.com](http://www.megacar.com)
- Gruppo Ibis  [http://www.gruppo-ibis.com](http://www.gruppo-ibis.com)