

The 7C's of Customer Interface Design

Understanding customer interactivity on the Internet

Customer Interface

- Shifts from "face-to-face" to "screen-to-face"
- Important to consider the types of interface design available

The Seven Design Elements of Customer Interface

- **The 7Cs Framework**
- A virtual representation of a firm's chosen value proposition
- **Compelling sites**
 - communicate the core value proposition of the company
 - provide a compelling rationale for buying and/or visiting the site

Context

- Captures its aesthetic and functional look-and-feel
- Focuses on the "how" of site design.

Content

- Focuses on "what" is presented

Community

- The interaction that occurs between site users
- Community does not refer to site-to-user interactions

Customization

- The site's ability to tailor itself or to be tailored by each user

Communication

- The dialogue that unfolds between the site and its users

Connection

- The extent of the formal linkages between the site and other sites

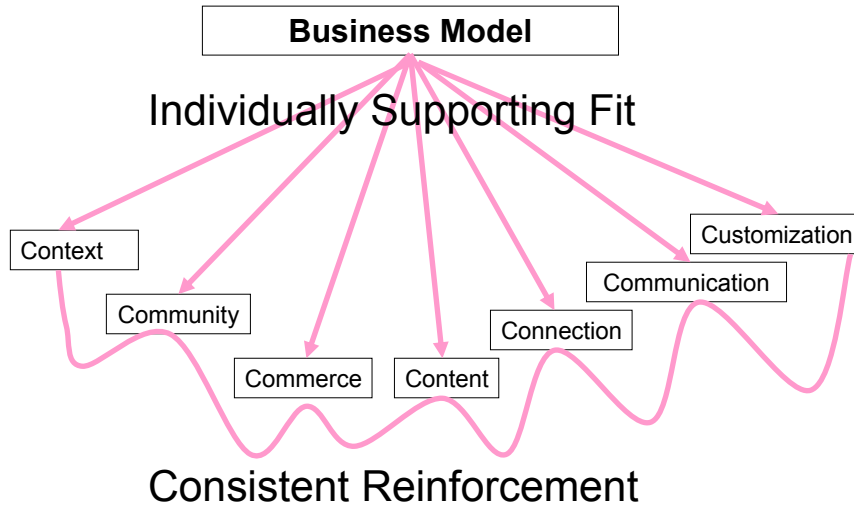
Commerce

- The sale of goods, products, or services on the site

Building Synergy

- Success of a business depends on the extent that all of the Cs work together to support the value proposition and business model.
- Two concepts of synergy:
 - **Fit** = the extent to which each of the 7Cs individually supports the business model
 - **Reinforcement** = degree of consistency between each of the Cs

Fit and Reinforcement of the 7 C's



1. CONTEXT

- What determines the Look-and-feel of a screen-to-face customer interface?
 - Function
 - Aesthetics

Function

- Site layout
 - Section breakdown
 - Linking structure
 - Navigation tools
- Performance
 - Speed
 - Reliability
 - Platform independence
 - Media accessibility

Aesthetic

- Color scheme
- Visual themes

2. CONTENT

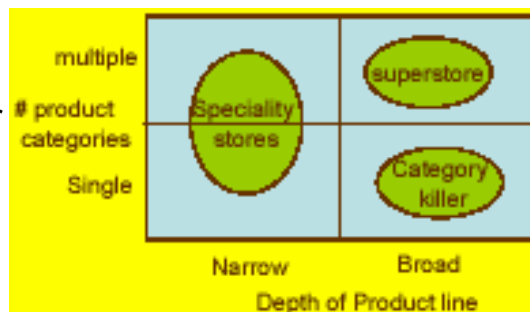
All digital information included on the site

- Four dimensions to content are
 - a) offering mix
- Can include product, information, and/or services
 - b) appeal mix
- Refers to the promotional and communications messaging projected by the company
 - c) multimedia mix
 - d) content type
- Information that has been collected and presented on a website
- has a degree of time sensitivity
 - Current content is highly time-sensitive information with a very short shelf life
 - Reference content is less time-sensitive information with a longer shelf life

Content Archetypes – 1. Offering Dominant

Store sites that sell physical goods and have analog equivalents in the physical world or marketplace

- Superstore
- Category killer
- Specialty



Content Archetypes – 2. Information-Dominant

Focus heavily on information, but a subset of these sites focus on entertainment as well

Content Archetypes - 3. Market-Dominant

- Do not directly offer goods or services for sale
- but create a market where buyers and sellers
- congregate to conclude transactions
- – serve as brokers and act as catalysts for business
- transactions

3. COMMUNITY

Includes a feeling of membership in a group along with a strong sense of involvement and shared common interests with that group

- Based on user-to-user communication, which can be one-to-one or one-to-many

Elements of a Community

Can be assessed along six criteria:

1. Cohesion
2. Effectiveness
3. Help
4. Relationships
5. Language
6. Self-regulation

Degree of Member Participation

Four levels of participation

1. Passives
2. Actives
3. Motivators
4. Caretakers

Member Benefits

include the following:

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

Dimensions of Community

- Interactive communication
 - Users or customers can directly and continually exchange responses with each other as interactive communication
 - Sites can provide facilities to support real-time or near realtime user-to-user interactive communication as electronic conversation in several forms:
 - Chat
 - instant messaging or instant chat
 - message boards
 - member-to-member e-mail

Non-interactive Communication

- Does not involve the direct and continual exchange of responses between users
- Supported many times by a structure that gives the user a sense of permanence and place rather than a continuous stream of conversation
- Members make non-interactive contributions to community in two ways:
 - public member web pages
 - member content

Community Archetypes

Six types of virtual communities

1. Bazaar: allows users to wander through a vast number of interest areas but does not provide any means for users to interact with each other in any meaningful way
2. Theme Park: focuses on a finite number of interest areas that are organized by categories and subcategories
3. Club: highly focused on only one area of interest and promotes a considerable amount of interaction among members
4. Shrine: highly focused community with minimal interaction between members
5. Theater: focused in a particular area but allows for moderate interaction among members
6. Café: focuses on a common area of interest but also provides for considerable interaction among members

4. CUSTOMISATION

A site's ability to tailor itself to each user or be tailored by each user

– Can be initiated by:

- the user - a process termed "personalisation,"
- the organisation - a process termed "tailoring."

Personalization

To attract users and to keep them returning, the site provides a variety of features that include

- personalized e-mail accounts
- virtual hard-disk storage
- software agents to perform simple tasks

Tailoring by Site

The ability through software to dynamically publish unique versions of the site to address a specific user's interests, habits, and needs more appropriately.

5. COMMUNICATION

Dialogue that is initiated by the organization.

- one-way information sent from the organization to the user – broadcast
- Two way communication between the organization and a user – interactive
- Hybrid

Broadcast Communication

- Mass mailings
- FAQ
- E-mail newsletters
- Content-update reminders
- Webcast events

Interactive Communication

- e-commerce dialogue
- Customer service
- User input

6. CONNECTION

Degree to which a given site is able to link to other sites through a hypertext jump or hyperlink from one webpage to another

Links to sites

- Links that take the user completely outside the home site and into a third-party site
- Framed site
- Pop ups
- Affiliate content

7. COMMERCE

Those features of the customer interface that support the various aspects of trading transactions

For a site to have e-commerce capabilities,
a number of features must be present:

- Registration
- Shopping cart
- Security
- Credit-card approval
- One-click shopping
- Orders through affiliates
- Configuration technology
- Order tracking
- Delivery options