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	2	20130066728	A1	2013-03-14	DiSTEFANO III	
	3	20130066729	A1	2013-03-14	DiSTEFANO III	
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☐ That each item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was first cited in any communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(1).

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Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship

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Go to a section in the article:

Abstract

Social network sites (SNSs) are increasingly attracting the attention of academic and industry researchers intrigued by their affordances and reach. This special theme section of the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* brings together scholarship on these emergent phenomena. In this introductory article, we describe features of SNSs and propose a comprehensive definition. We then present one perspective on the history of such sites, discussing key changes and developments. After briefly summarizing existing scholarship concerning SNSs, we discuss the articles in this special section and conclude with considerations for future research.

Introduction

Since their introduction, social network sites (SNSs) such as MySpace, Facebook, Cyworld, and Bebo have attracted millions of users, many of whom have integrated these sites into their daily practices. As of this writing, there are hundreds of SNSs, with various technological affordances, supporting a wide range of interests and practices. While their key technological features are fairly consistent, the cultures that emerge around SNSs are varied. Most sites support the maintenance of pre-existing social networks, but others help strangers connect based on shared interests, political views, or activities. Some sites cater to diverse audiences, while others attract people based on common language or shared racial, sexual, religious, or nationality-based identities. Sites also vary in the extent to which they incorporate new information and communication tools, such as mobile connectivity, blogging, and photo/video-sharing.

Scholars from disparate fields have examined SNSs in order to understand the practices, implications, culture, and meaning of the sites, as well as users' engagement with them. This special theme section of the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* brings together a unique collection of articles that analyze a wide spectrum of social network sites using various methodological techniques, theoretical

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traditions, and analytic approaches. By collecting these articles in this issue, our goal is to showcase some of the interdisciplinary scholarship around these sites.

The purpose of this introduction is to provide a conceptual, historical, and scholarly context for the articles in this collection. We begin by defining what constitutes a social network site and then present one perspective on the historical development of SNSs, drawing from personal interviews and public accounts of sites and their changes over time. Following this, we review recent scholarship on SNSs and attempt to contextualize and highlight key works. We conclude with a description of the articles included in this special section and suggestions for future research.

Social Network Sites: A Definition

We define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.

While we use the term "social network site" to describe this phenomenon, the term "social networking sites" also appears in public discourse, and the two terms are often used interchangeably. We chose not to employ the term "networking" for two reasons: emphasis and scope. "Networking" emphasizes relationship initiation, often between strangers. While networking is possible on these sites, it is not the primary practice on many of them, nor is it what differentiates them from other forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC).

What makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks. This can result in connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal, and these meetings are frequently between "latent ties" (Haythornthwaite, 2005) who share some offline connection. On many of the large SNSs, participants are not necessarily "networking" or looking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network. To emphasize this articulated social network as a critical organizing feature of these sites, we label them "social network sites."

While SNSs have implemented a wide variety of technical features, their backbone consists of visible profiles that display an articulated list of Friends[1] who are also users of the system. Profiles are unique pages where one can "type oneself into being" (Sundén, 2003, p. 3). After joining an SNS, an individual is asked to fill out forms containing a series of questions. The profile is generated using the answers to these questions, which typically include descriptors such as age, location, interests, and an "about me" section. Most sites also encourage users to upload a profile photo. Some sites allow users to enhance their profiles by adding multimedia content or modifying their profile's look and feel. Others, such as Facebook, allow users to add modules ("Applications") that enhance their profile.

The visibility of a profile varies by site and according to user discretion. By default, profiles on Friendster and Tribe.net are crawled by search engines, making them visible to anyone, regardless of whether or

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not the viewer has an account. Alternatively, LinkedIn controls what a viewer may see based on whether she or he has a paid account. Sites like MySpace allow users to choose whether they want their profile to be public or "Friends only." Facebook takes a different approach—by default, users who are part of the same "network" can view each other's profiles, unless a profile owner has decided to deny permission to those in their network. Structural variations around visibility and access are one of the primary ways that SNSs differentiate themselves from each other.

After joining a social network site, users are prompted to identify others in the system with whom they have a relationship. The label for these relationships differs depending on the site—popular terms include "Friends," "Contacts," and "Fans." Most SNSs require bi-directional confirmation for Friendship, but some do not. These one-directional ties are sometimes labeled as "Fans" or "Followers," but many sites call these Friends as well. The term "Friends" can be misleading, because the connection does not necessarily mean friendship in the everyday vernacular sense, and the reasons people connect are varied (boyd, 2006a).

The public display of connections is a crucial component of SNSs. The Friends list contains links to each Friend's profile, enabling viewers to traverse the network graph by clicking through the Friends lists. On most sites, the list of Friends is visible to anyone who is permitted to view the profile, although there are exceptions. For instance, some MySpace users have hacked their profiles to hide the Friends display, and LinkedIn allows users to opt out of displaying their network.

Most SNSs also provide a mechanism for users to leave messages on their Friends' profiles. This feature typically involves leaving "comments," although sites employ various labels for this feature. In addition, SNSs often have a private messaging feature similar to webmail. While both private messages and comments are popular on most of the major SNSs, they are not universally available.

Not all social network sites began as such. QQ started as a Chinese instant messaging service, LunarStorm as a community site, Cyworld as a Korean discussion forum tool, and Skyrock (formerly Skyblog) was a French blogging service before adding SNS features. Classmates.com, a directory of school affiliates launched in 1995, began supporting articulated lists of Friends after SNSs became popular. AsianAvenue, MiGente, and BlackPlanet were early popular ethnic community sites with limited Friends functionality before re-launching in 2005-2006 with SNS features and structure.

Beyond profiles, Friends, comments, and private messaging, SNSs vary greatly in their features and user base. Some have photo-sharing or video-sharing capabilities; others have built-in blogging and instant messaging technology. There are mobile-specific SNSs (e.g., Dodgeball), but some web-based SNSs also support limited mobile interactions (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, and Cyworld). Many SNSs target people from specific geographical regions or linguistic groups, although this does not always determine the site's constituency. Orkut, for example, was launched in the United States with an English-only interface, but Portuguese-speaking Brazilians quickly became the dominant user group (Kopytoff, 2004). Some sites are designed with specific ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, political, or other identity-driven categories in mind. There are even SNSs for dogs (Dogster) and cats (Catster), although their owners must manage their profiles.

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While SNSs are often designed to be widely accessible, many attract homogeneous populations initially, so it is not uncommon to find groups using sites to segregate themselves by nationality, age, educational level, or other factors that typically segment society (Hargittai, this issue), even if that was not the intention of the designers.

A History of Social Network Sites

The Early Years

According to the definition above, the first recognizable social network site launched in 1997. SixDegrees.com allowed users to create profiles, list their Friends and, beginning in 1998, surf the Friends lists. Each of these features existed in some form before SixDegrees, of course. Profiles existed on most major dating sites and many community sites. AIM and ICQ buddy lists supported lists of Friends, although those Friends were not visible to others. Classmates.com allowed people to affiliate with their high school or college and surf the network for others who were also affiliated, but users could not create profiles or list Friends until years later. SixDegrees was the first to combine these features.

SixDegrees promoted itself as a tool to help people connect with and send messages to others. While SixDegrees attracted millions of users, it failed to become a sustainable business and, in 2000, the service closed. Looking back, its founder believes that SixDegrees was simply ahead of its time (A. Weinreich, personal communication, July 11, 2007). While people were already flocking to the Internet, most did not have extended networks of friends who were online. Early adopters complained that there was little to do after accepting Friend requests, and most users were not interested in meeting strangers.

From 1997 to 2001, a number of community tools began supporting various combinations of profiles and publicly articulated Friends. AsianAvenue, BlackPlanet, and MiGente allowed users to create personal, professional, and dating profiles—users could identify Friends on their personal profiles without seeking approval for those connections (O. Wasow, personal communication, August 16, 2007). Likewise, shortly after its launch in 1999, LiveJournal listed one-directional connections on user pages. LiveJournal's creator suspects that he fashioned these Friends after instant messaging buddy lists (B. Fitzpatrick, personal communication, June 15, 2007)—on LiveJournal, people mark others as Friends to follow their journals and manage privacy settings. The Korean virtual worlds site Cyworld was started in 1999 and added SNS features in 2001, independent of these other sites (see Kim & Yun, this issue). Likewise, when the Swedish web community LunarStorm refashioned itself as an SNS in 2000, it contained Friends lists, guestbooks, and diary pages (D. Skog, personal communication, September 24, 2007).

The next wave of SNSs began when Ryze.com was launched in 2001 to help people leverage their business networks. Ryze's founder reports that he first introduced the site to his friends—primarily members of the San Francisco business and technology community, including the entrepreneurs and investors behind many future SNSs (A. Scott, personal communication, June 14, 2007). In particular, the people behind Ryze, Tribe.net, LinkedIn, and Friendster were tightly entwined personally and professionally. They believed that they could support each other without competing (Festa, 2003). In the end, Ryze never acquired mass popularity, Tribe.net grew to attract a passionate niche user base,

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LinkedIn became a powerful business service, and Friendster became the most significant, if only as "one of the biggest disappointments in Internet history" (Chafkin, 2007, p. 1).

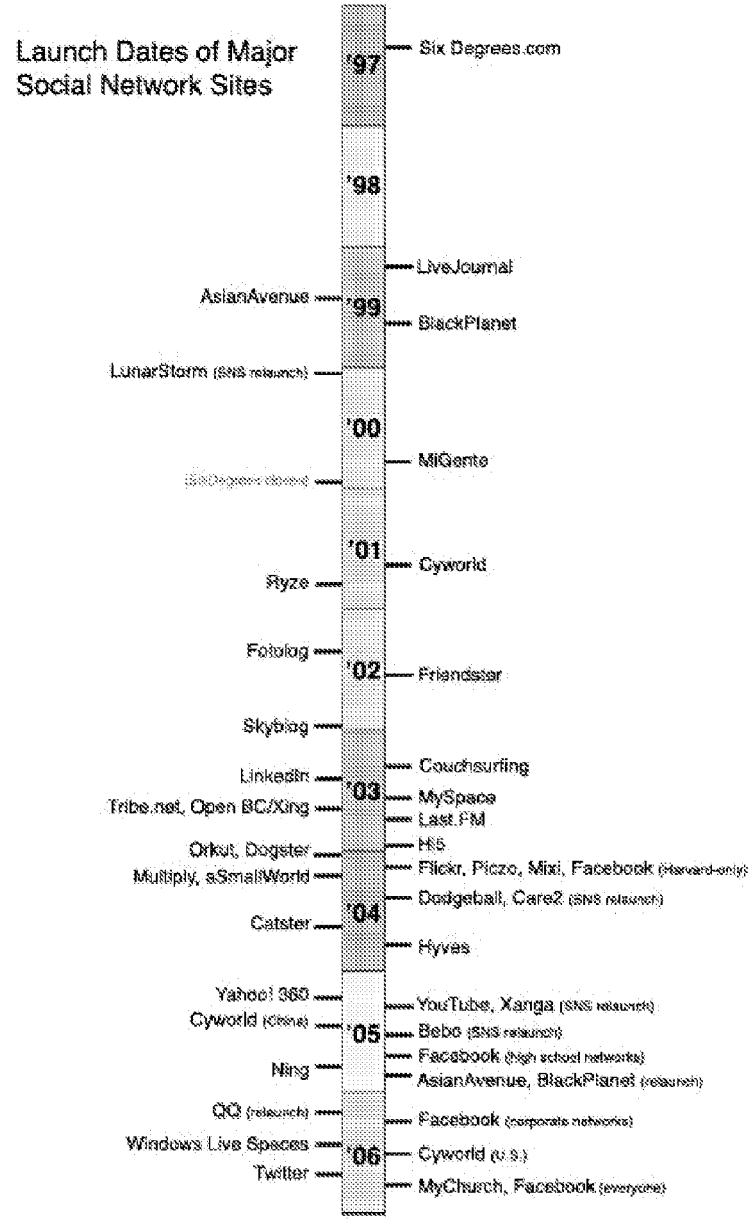


Figure 1. Timeline of the launch dates of many major SNSs and dates when community sites re-launched with SNS features

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Like any brief history of a major phenomenon, ours is necessarily incomplete. In the following section we discuss Friendster, MySpace, and Facebook, three key SNSs that shaped the business, cultural, and research landscape.

The Rise (and Fall) of Friendster

Friendster launched in 2002 as a social complement to Ryze. It was designed to compete with Match.com, a profitable online dating site (Cohen, 2003). While most dating sites focused on introducing people to strangers with similar interests, Friendster was designed to help friends-of-friends meet, based on the assumption that friends-of-friends would make better romantic partners than would strangers (J. Abrams, personal communication, March 27, 2003). Friendster gained traction among three groups of early adopters who shaped the site—bloggers, attendees of the Burning Man arts festival, and gay men (boyd, 2004)—and grew to 300,000 users through word of mouth before traditional press coverage began in May 2003 (O'Shea, 2003).

As Friendster's popularity surged, the site encountered technical and social difficulties (boyd, 2006b). Friendster's servers and databases were ill-equipped to handle its rapid growth, and the site faltered regularly, frustrating users who replaced email with Friendster. Because organic growth had been critical to creating a coherent community, the onslaught of new users who learned about the site from media coverage upset the cultural balance. Furthermore, exponential growth meant a collapse in social contexts: Users had to face their bosses and former classmates alongside their close friends. To complicate matters, Friendster began restricting the activities of its most passionate users.

The initial design of Friendster restricted users from viewing profiles of people who were more than four degrees away (friends-of-friends-of-friends-of-friends). In order to view additional profiles, users began adding acquaintances and interesting-looking strangers to expand their reach. Some began massively collecting Friends, an activity that was implicitly encouraged through a "most popular" feature. The ultimate collectors were fake profiles representing iconic fictional characters: celebrities, concepts, and other such entities. These "Fakesters" outraged the company, who banished fake profiles and eliminated the "most popular" feature (boyd, in press-b). While few people actually created Fakesters, many more enjoyed surfing Fakesters for entertainment or using functional Fakesters (e.g., "Brown University") to find people they knew.

The active deletion of Fakesters (and genuine users who chose non-realistic photos) signaled to some that the company did not share users' interests. Many early adopters left because of the combination of technical difficulties, social collisions, and a rupture of trust between users and the site (boyd, 2006b). However, at the same time that it was fading in the U.S., its popularity skyrocketed in the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia (Goldberg, 2007).

SNSs Hit the Mainstream

From 2003 onward, many new SNSs were launched, prompting social software analyst Clay Shirky (2003) to coin the term YASNS: "Yet Another Social Networking Service." Most took the form of profile-centric sites, trying to replicate the early success of Friendster or target specific demographics. While socially-organized SNSs solicit broad audiences, professional sites such as LinkedIn, Visible Path, and Xing

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(formerly openBC) focus on business people. "Passion-centric" SNSs like Dogster (T. Rheingold, personal communication, August 2, 2007) help strangers connect based on shared interests. Care2 helps activists meet, Couchsurfing connects travelers to people with couches, and MyChurch joins Christian churches and their members. Furthermore, as the social media and user-generated content phenomena grew, websites focused on media sharing began implementing SNS features and becoming SNSs themselves. Examples include Flickr (photo sharing), Last.FM (music listening habits), and YouTube (video sharing).

With the plethora of venture-backed startups launching in Silicon Valley, few people paid attention to SNSs that gained popularity elsewhere, even those built by major corporations. For example, Google's Orkut failed to build a sustainable U.S. user base, but a "Brazilian invasion" (Fragoso, 2006) made Orkut the national SNS of Brazil. Microsoft's Windows Live Spaces (a.k.a. MSN Spaces) also launched to lukewarm U.S. reception but became extremely popular elsewhere.

Few analysts or journalists noticed when MySpace launched in Santa Monica, California, hundreds of miles from Silicon Valley. MySpace was begun in 2003 to compete with sites like Friendster, Xanga, and AsianAvenue, according to co-founder Tom Anderson (personal communication, August 2, 2007); the founders wanted to attract estranged Friendster users (T. Anderson, personal communication, February 2, 2006). After rumors emerged that Friendster would adopt a fee-based system, users posted Friendster messages encouraging people to join alternate SNSs, including Tribe.net and MySpace (T. Anderson, personal communication, August 2, 2007). Because of this, MySpace was able to grow rapidly by capitalizing on Friendster's alienation of its early adopters. One particularly notable group that encouraged others to switch were indie-rock bands who were expelled from Friendster for failing to comply with profile regulations.

While MySpace was not launched with bands in mind, they were welcomed. Indie-rock bands from the Los Angeles region began creating profiles, and local promoters used MySpace to advertise VIP passes for popular clubs. Intrigued, MySpace contacted local musicians to see how they could support them (T. Anderson, personal communication, September 28, 2006). Bands were not the sole source of MySpace growth, but the symbiotic relationship between bands and fans helped MySpace expand beyond former Friendster users. The bands-and-fans dynamic was mutually beneficial: Bands wanted to be able to contact fans, while fans desired attention from their favorite bands and used Friend connections to signal identity and affiliation.

Futhermore, MySpace differentiated itself by regularly adding features based on user demand (boyd, 2006b) and by allowing users to personalize their pages. This "feature" emerged because MySpace did not restrict users from adding HTML into the forms that framed their profiles; a copy/paste code culture emerged on the web to support users in generating unique MySpace backgrounds and layouts (Perkel, in press).

Teenagers began joining MySpace *en masse* in 2004. Unlike older users, most teens were never on Friendster—some joined because they wanted to connect with their favorite bands; others were introduced to the site through older family members. As teens began signing up, they encouraged their friends to join. Rather than rejecting underage users, MySpace changed its user policy to allow minors. As the site grew, three distinct populations began to form: musicians/artists, teenagers, and the post-college urban

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social crowd. By and large, the latter two groups did not interact with one another except through bands. Because of the lack of mainstream press coverage during 2004, few others noticed the site's growing popularity.

Then, in July 2005, News Corporation purchased MySpace for $580 million (BBC, 2005), attracting massive media attention. Afterwards, safety issues plagued MySpace. The site was implicated in a series of sexual interactions between adults and minors, prompting legal action (Consumer Affairs, 2006). A moral panic concerning sexual predators quickly spread (Bahney, 2006), although research suggests that the concerns were exaggerated.[2]

A Global Phenomenon

While MySpace attracted the majority of media attention in the U.S. and abroad, SNSs were proliferating and growing in popularity worldwide. Friendster gained traction in the Pacific Islands, Orkut became the premier SNS in Brazil before growing rapidly in India (Madhavan, 2007), Mixi attained widespread adoption in Japan, LunarStorm took off in Sweden, Dutch users embraced Hyves, Grono captured Poland, Hi5 was adopted in smaller countries in Latin America, South America, and Europe, and Bebo became very popular in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia. Additionally, previously popular communication and community services began implementing SNS features. The Chinese QQ instant messaging service instantly became the largest SNS worldwide when it added profiles and made friends visible (McLeod, 2006), while the forum tool Cyworld cornered the Korean market by introducing homepages and buddies (Ewers, 2006).

Blogging services with complete SNS features also became popular. In the U.S., blogging tools with SNS features, such as Xanga, LiveJournal, and Vox, attracted broad audiences. Skyrock reigns in France, and Windows Live Spaces dominates numerous markets worldwide, including in Mexico, Italy, and Spain. Although SNSs like QQ, Orkut, and Live Spaces are just as large as, if not larger than, MySpace, they receive little coverage in U.S. and English-speaking media, making it difficult to track their trajectories.

Expanding Niche Communities

Alongside these open services, other SNSs launched to support niche demographics before expanding to a broader audience. Unlike previous SNSs, Facebook was designed to support distinct college networks only. Facebook began in early 2004 as a Harvard-only SNS (Cassidy, 2006). To join, a user had to have a harvard.edu email address. As Facebook began supporting other schools, those users were also required to have university email addresses associated with those institutions, a requirement that kept the site relatively closed and contributed to users' perceptions of the site as an intimate, private community.

Beginning in September 2005, Facebook expanded to include high school students, professionals inside corporate networks, and, eventually, everyone. The change to open signup did not mean that new users could easily access users in closed networks—gaining access to corporate networks still required the appropriate .com address, while gaining access to high school networks required administrator approval. (As of this writing, only membership in regional networks requires no permission.) Unlike other SNSs, Facebook users are unable to make their full profiles public to all users. Another feature that differentiates Facebook is the ability for outside developers to build "Applications" which allow users to

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personalize their profiles and perform other tasks, such as compare movie preferences and chart travel histories.

While most SNSs focus on growing broadly and exponentially, others explicitly seek narrower audiences. Some, like aSmallWorld and BeautifulPeople, intentionally restrict access to appear selective and elite. Others—activity-centered sites like Couchsurfing, identity-driven sites like BlackPlanet, and affiliation-focused sites like MyChurch—are limited by their target demographic and thus tend to be smaller. Finally, anyone who wishes to create a niche social network site can do so on Ning, a platform and hosting service that encourages users to create their own SNSs.

Currently, there are no reliable data regarding how many people use SNSs, although marketing research indicates that SNSs are growing in popularity worldwide (comScore, 2007). This growth has prompted many corporations to invest time and money in creating, purchasing, promoting, and advertising SNSs. At the same time, other companies are blocking their employees from accessing the sites. Additionally, the U.S. military banned soldiers from accessing MySpace (Frosch, 2007) and the Canadian government prohibited employees from Facebook (Benzie, 2007), while the U.S. Congress has proposed legislation to ban youth from accessing SNSs in schools and libraries (H.R. 5319, 2006; S. 49, 2007).

The rise of SNSs indicates a shift in the organization of online communities. While websites dedicated to communities of interest still exist and prosper, SNSs are primarily organized around people, not interests. Early public online communities such as Usenet and public discussion forums were structured by topics or according to topical hierarchies, but social network sites are structured as personal (or "egocentric") networks, with the individual at the center of their own community. This more accurately mirrors unmediated social structures, where "the world is composed of networks, not groups" (Wellman, 1988, p. 37). The introduction of SNS features has introduced a new organizational framework for online communities, and with it, a vibrant new research context.

Previous Scholarship

Scholarship concerning SNSs is emerging from diverse disciplinary and methodological traditions, addresses a range of topics, and builds on a large body of CMC research. The goal of this section is to survey research that is directly concerned with social network sites, and in so doing, to set the stage for the articles in this special issue. To date, the bulk of SNS research has focused on impression management and friendship performance, networks and network structure, online/offline connections, and privacy issues.

Impression Management and Friendship Performance

Like other online contexts in which individuals are consciously able to construct an online representation of self—such as online dating profiles and MUDS—SNSs constitute an important research context for scholars investigating processes of impression management, self-presentation, and friendship performance. In one of the earliest academic articles on SNSs, boyd (2004) examined Friendster as a locus of publicly articulated social networks that allowed users to negotiate presentations of self and connect with others. Donath and boyd (2004) extended this to suggest that "public displays of connection" serve as important

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identity signals that help people navigate the networked social world, in that an extended network may serve to validate identity information presented in profiles.

While most sites encourage users to construct accurate representations of themselves, participants do this to varying degrees. Marwick (2005) found that users on three different SNSs had complex strategies for negotiating the rigidity of a prescribed "authentic" profile, while boyd (in press-b) examined the phenomenon of "Fakesters" and argued that profiles could never be "real." The extent to which portraits are authentic or playful varies across sites; both social and technological forces shape user practices. Skog (2005) found that the status feature on LunarStorm strongly influenced how people behaved and what they choose to reveal—profiles there indicate one's status as measured by activity (e.g., sending messages) and indicators of authenticity (e.g., using a "real" photo instead of a drawing).

Another aspect of self-presentation is the articulation of friendship links, which serve as identity markers for the profile owner. Impression management is one of the reasons given by Friendster users for choosing particular friends (Donath & boyd, 2004). Recognizing this, Zinman and Donath (2007) noted that MySpace spammers leverage people's willingness to connect to interesting people to find targets for their spam.

In their examination of LiveJournal "friendship," Fono and Raynes-Goldie (2006) described users' understandings regarding public displays of connections and how the Friending function can operate as a catalyst for social drama. In listing user motivations for Friending, boyd (2006a) points out that "Friends" on SNSs are not the same as "friends" in the everyday sense; instead, Friends provide context by offering users an imagined audience to guide behavioral norms. Other work in this area has examined the use of Friendster Testimonials as self-presentational devices (boyd & Heer, 2006) and the extent to which the attractiveness of one's Friends (as indicated by Facebook's "Wall" feature) impacts impression formation (Walther, Van Der Heide, Kim, & Westerman, in press).

Networks and Network Structure

Social network sites also provide rich sources of naturalistic behavioral data. Profile and linkage data from SNSs can be gathered either through the use of automated collection techniques or through datasets provided directly from the company, enabling network analysis researchers to explore large-scale patterns of friending, usage, and other visible indicators (Hogan, in press), and continuing an analysis trend that started with examinations of blogs and other websites. For instance, Golder, Wilkinson, and Huberman (2007) examined an anonymized dataset consisting of 362 million messages exchanged by over four million Facebook users for insight into Friending and messaging activities. Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfield (2007) explored the relationship between profile elements and number of Facebook friends, finding that profile fields that reduce transaction costs and are harder to falsify are most likely to be associated with larger number of friendship links. These kinds of data also lend themselves well to analysis through network visualization (Adamic, Büyükkökten, & Adar, 2003; Heer & boyd, 2005; Paolillo & Wright, 2005).

SNS researchers have also studied the network structure of Friendship. Analyzing the roles people played in the growth of Flickr and Yahoo! 360's networks, Kumar, Novak, and Tomkins (2006) argued that there are passive members, inviters, and linkers "who fully participate in the social evolution of the network" (p. 1). Scholarship concerning LiveJournal's network has included a Friendship classification

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scheme (Hsu, Lancaster, Paradesi, & Weniger, 2007), an analysis of the role of language in the topology of Friendship (Herring et al., 2007), research into the importance of geography in Friending (Liben-Nowell, Novak, Kumar, Raghavan, & Tomkins, 2005), and studies on what motivates people to join particular communities (Backstrom, Huttenlocher, Kleinberg, & Lan, 2006). Based on Orkut data, Spertus, Sahami, and Büyükkökten (2005) identified a topology of users through their membership in certain communities; they suggest that sites can use this to recommend additional communities of interest to users. Finally, Liu, Maes, and Davenport (2006) argued that Friend connections are not the only network structure worth investigating. They examined the ways in which the performance of tastes (favorite music, books, film, etc.) constitutes an alternate network structure, which they call a "taste fabric."

Bridging Online and Offline Social Networks

Although exceptions exist, the available research suggests that most SNSs primarily support pre-existing social relations. Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) suggest that Facebook is used to maintain existing offline relationships or solidify offline connections, as opposed to meeting new people. These relationships may be weak ties, but typically there is some common offline element among individuals who friend one another, such as a shared class at school. This is one of the chief dimensions that differentiate SNSs from earlier forms of public CMC such as newsgroups (Ellison et al., 2007). Research in this vein has investigated how online interactions interface with offline ones. For instance, Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfield (2006) found that Facebook users engage in "searching" for people with whom they have an offline connection more than they "browse" for complete strangers to meet. Likewise, Pew research found that 91% of U.S. teens who use SNSs do so to connect with friends (Lenhart & Madden, 2007).

Given that SNSs enable individuals to connect with one another, it is not surprising that they have become deeply embedded in user's lives. In Korea, Cyworld has become an integral part of everyday life—Choi (2006) found that 85% of that study's respondents "listed the maintenance and reinforcement of pre-existing social networks as their main motive for Cyworld use" (p. 181). Likewise, boyd (2008) argues that MySpace and Facebook enable U.S. youth to socialize with their friends even when they are unable to gather in unmediated situations; she argues that SNSs are "networked publics" that support sociability, just as unmediated public spaces do.

Privacy

Popular press coverage of SNSs has emphasized potential privacy concerns, primarily concerning the safety of younger users (George, 2006; Kornblum & Marklein, 2006). Researchers have investigated the potential threats to privacy associated with SNSs. In one of the first academic studies of privacy and SNSs, Gross and Acquisti (2005) analyzed 4,000 Carnegie Mellon University Facebook profiles and outlined the potential threats to privacy contained in the personal information included on the site by students, such as the potential ability to reconstruct users' social security numbers using information often found in profiles, such as hometown and date of birth.

Acquisti and Gross (2006) argue that there is often a disconnect between students' desire to protect privacy and their behaviors, a theme that is also explored in Stutzman's (2006) survey of Facebook users and Barnes's (2006) description of the "privacy paradox" that occurs when teens are not aware of the

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public nature of the Internet. In analyzing trust on social network sites, Dwyer, Hiltz, and Passerini (2007) argued that trust and usage goals may affect what people are willing to share—Facebook users expressed greater trust in Facebook than MySpace users did in MySpace and thus were more willing to share information on the site.

In another study examining security issues and SNSs, Jagatic, Johnson, Jakobsson, and Menczer (2007) used freely accessible profile data from SNSs to craft a "phishing" scheme that appeared to originate from a friend on the network; their targets were much more likely to give away information to this "friend" than to a perceived stranger. Survey data offer a more optimistic perspective on the issue, suggesting that teens are aware of potential privacy threats online and that many are proactive about taking steps to minimize certain potential risks. Pew found that 55% of online teens have profiles, 66% of whom report that their profile is not visible to all Internet users (Lenhart & Madden, 2007). Of the teens with completely open profiles, 46% reported including at least some false information.

Privacy is also implicated in users' ability to control impressions and manage social contexts. Boyd (in press-a) asserted that Facebook's introduction of the "News Feed" feature disrupted students' sense of control, even though data exposed through the feed were previously accessible. Preibusch, Hoser, Gürses, and Berendt (2007) argued that the privacy options offered by SNSs do not provide users with the flexibility they need to handle conflicts with friends who have different conceptions of privacy; they suggest a framework for privacy in SNSs that they believe would help resolve these conflicts.

SNSs are also challenging legal conceptions of privacy. Hodge (2006) argued that the fourth amendment to the U.S. Constitution and legal decisions concerning privacy are not equipped to address social network sites. For example, do police officers have the right to access content posted to Facebook without a warrant? The legality of this hinges on users' expectation of privacy and whether or not Facebook profiles are considered public or private.

Other Research

In addition to the themes identified above, a growing body of scholarship addresses other aspects of SNSs, their users, and the practices they enable. For example, scholarship on the ways in which race and ethnicity (Byrne, in press; Gajjala, 2007), religion (Nyland & Near, 2007), gender (Geidner, Flook, & Bell, 2007; Hjorth & Kim, 2005), and sexuality connect to, are affected by, and are enacted in social network sites raise interesting questions about how identity is shaped within these sites. Fragoso (2006) examined the role of national identity in SNS use through an investigation into the "Brazilian invasion" of Orkut and the resulting culture clash between Brazilians and Americans on the site. Other scholars are beginning to do cross-cultural comparisons of SNS use—Hjorth and Yuji (in press) compare Japanese usage of Mixi and Korean usage of Cyworld, while Herring et al. (2007) examine the practices of users who bridge different languages on LiveJournal—but more work in this area is needed.

Scholars are documenting the implications of SNS use with respect to schools, universities, and libraries. For example, scholarship has examined how students feel about having professors on Facebook (Hewitt & Forte, 2006) and how faculty participation affects student-professor relations (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007). Charnigo and Barnett-Ellis (2007) found that librarians are overwhelmingly aware of Facebook and are against proposed U.S. legislation that would ban minors from accessing SNSs at libraries, but that

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most see SNSs as outside the purview of librarianship. Finally, challenging the view that there is nothing educational about SNSs, Perkel (in press) analyzed copy/paste practices on MySpace as a form of literacy involving social and technical skills.

This overview is not comprehensive due to space limitations and because much work on SNSs is still in the process of being published. Additionally, we have not included literature in languages other than English (e.g., Recuero, 2005 on social capital and Orkut), due to our own linguistic limitations.

Overview of This Special Theme Section

The articles in this section address a variety of social network sites—BlackPlanet, Cyworld, Dodgeball, Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube—from multiple theoretical and methodological angles, building on previous studies of SNSs and broader theoretical traditions within CMC research, including relationship maintenance and issues of identity, performance, privacy, self-presentation, and civic engagement.

These pieces collectively provide insight into some of the ways in which online and offline experiences are deeply entwined. Using a relational dialectics approach, **Kyung-Hee Kim** and **Haejin Yun** analyze how Cyworld supports both interpersonal relations and self-relation for Korean users. They trace the subtle ways in which deeply engrained cultural beliefs and activities are integrated into online communication and behaviors on Cyworld—the online context reinforces certain aspects of users' cultural expectations about relationship maintenance (e.g., the concept of reciprocity), while the unique affordances of Cyworld enable participants to overcome offline constraints. **Dara Byrne** uses content analysis to examine civic engagement in forums on BlackPlanet and finds that online discussions are still plagued with the problems offline activists have long encountered. Drawing on interview and observation data, **Lee Humphreys** investigates early adopters' practices involving Dodgeball, a mobile social network service. She looks at the ways in which networked communication is reshaping offline social geography.

Other articles in this collection illustrate how innovative research methods can elucidate patterns of behavior that would be indistinguishable otherwise. For instance, **Hugo Liu** examines participants' performance of tastes and interests by analyzing and modeling the preferences listed on over 127,000 MySpace profiles, resulting in unique "taste maps." Likewise, through survey data collected at a college with diverse students in the U.S., **Eszter Hargittai** illuminates usage patterns that would otherwise be masked. She finds that adoption of particular services correlates with individuals' race and parental education level.

Existing theory is deployed, challenged, and extended by the approaches adopted in the articles in this section. **Judith Donath** extends signaling theory to explain different tactics SNS users adopt to reduce social costs while managing trust and identity. She argues that the construction and maintenance of relations on SNSs is akin to "social grooming." **Patricia Lange** complicates traditional dichotomies between "public" and "private" by analyzing how YouTube participants blur these lines in their video-sharing practices.

The articles in this collection highlight the significance of social network sites in the lives of users and as a topic of research. Collectively, they show how networked practices mirror, support, and alter known

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everyday practices, especially with respect to how people present (and hide) aspects of themselves and connect with others. The fact that participation on social network sites leaves online traces offers unprecedented opportunities for researchers. The scholarship in this special theme section takes advantage of this affordance, resulting in work that helps explain practices online and offline, as well as those that blend the two environments.

Future Research

The work described above and included in this special theme section contributes to an on-going dialogue about the importance of social network sites, both for practitioners and researchers. Vast, uncharted waters still remain to be explored. Methodologically, SNS researchers' ability to make causal claims is limited by a lack of experimental or longitudinal studies. Although the situation is rapidly changing, scholars still have a limited understanding of who is and who is not using these sites, why, and for what purposes, especially outside the U.S. Such questions will require large-scale quantitative and qualitative research. Richer, ethnographic research on populations more difficult to access (including non-users) would further aid scholars' ability to understand the long-term implications of these tools. We hope that the work described here and included in this collection will help build a foundation for future investigations of these and other important issues surrounding social network sites.

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Notes

1. To differentiate the articulated list of Friends on SNSs from the colloquial term "friends," we capitalize the former.
2. Although one out of seven teenagers received unwanted sexual solicitations online, only 9% came from people over the age of 25 (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2006). Research suggests that popular narratives around sexual predators on SNSs are misleading—cases of unsuspecting teens being lured by sexual predators are rare (Finkelhor, Ybarra, Lenhart, boyd, & Lordan, 2007). Furthermore, only .08% of students surveyed by the National School Boards Association (2007) met someone in person from an online encounter without permission from a parent.

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ACCESS MY LIBRARY
Search Information that Libraries Trust

Information Technology and Libraries

Creating and Managing Webrings: A Step-By-Step Guide. (library web site webrings)

Information Technology and Libraries | December 01, 1999 | Casey, Carol

As a means of collecting Web sites on a single topic into separate navigable universes on the Internet, Webrings are not only an alternative to a list of links, but to keyword search engines. Because of this, Webrings can be developed to enhance a library collection or support an educational curriculum. Unfortunately, the loosely structured instructions WebRing provides for establishing and managing Webrings makes the process more detailed and complicated than it really is. This article describes how to set-up and manage Webrings by clarifying these suggestions and suggests methods of streamlining the procedure.

Webrings are an interesting alternative to the ubiquitous list of links and to spider driven search engines found on the Web. As "a way to group together sites with similar content by linking them together in a circle or ring,"(1) Webrings have a versatility that a list of links does not. Unlike search engines, they give "the user the opportunity to explore single topic Web sites without having to deal with dead links and non-relevant Web sites that are swept into a keyword search."(2)

One of the most unique characteristics of a Webring is that all of the sites in the ring can be accessed from each other, creating a small navigable universe. Even more advantageous for the ring owner is that ring members can participate in the growth and maintenance of the ring. Members can alert the ring manager if they want to leave the ring, and they have the capability of updating their own ring profiles if their Web site URL changes. Members can also help the managers of large rings by checking for broken links; they can even assist in adding new sites.

Webrings are a unique opportunity for libraries to develop high quality groupings of Web sites devoted not only to specialized pockets of knowledge but to different aspects of librarianship. They can also be used as a flexible, dynamic way of linking Web sites within institutions, departments, or organizations without dealing with the constant updating of link lists. They may require more attention and dedication than a list of links, but they have the potential to be a more satisfying endeavor with lasting value to both the library and the global community.

This step-by-step guide is based on personal experience and the study of others' efforts in Webring creation and management. It is an attempt to cut through many confusing aspects of the procedure and present the most straightforward approach.

A Brief History

The first ring of Web sites was created by Denis Howe at London's Imperial College in December, 1994.(3) EUROPa, the Expanding Unidirectional Ring of Pages, is "comprised of sites chained together and the only way to move through the ring is in a single direction. When a new site is added, the owner of the previous site has to add a link to it. It is also up to the Web site owner to keep track of the next Web site in the chain, in case it disappears and causes a break in the ring."(4) Two features place EUROPa firmly in the novelty category. First, it is simply a string of unrelated Web sites. Second, it can only be traversed in a single direction.

The concept of a ring of Web sites caught the imagination of seventeen-year-old Sage Weil when he discovered EUROPa while surfing the Web in the summer of 1995. Within a few months, Weil solved the unidirectional problem by devising a centralized CGI script to link all the sites. This "allowed site maintainers to point to a Webring address that would in turn look up the current URL for the next site in the ring, eliminating the need to update anchor tags."(5) In September of the same year, Weil made a few modifications to the script that enabled the creation of multiple rings. This opened the Webring to many possible practical uses. In March 1996, he officially launched WebRing, offering free use of the HTML code and server space for ring management to anyone who wanted to form a single-theme ring. WebRing moved to its own server in September of 1996.

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By August 1997, Weil realized that WebRing needed a better server and that he could not handle all the administrative duties of managing WebRing alone. Starseed, Inc. bought WebRing with an interest in pursuing more commercial uses of Webrings. Despite this, Charley Lanusse, president of Starseed, continues to offer free WebRing service to anyone with an idea for a topic-driven ring. Starseed feels that "in serving the three primary World Wide Web groups: visitors, member sites, and advertiser-merchants, this extraordinary system remains entirely open and free of charge to both visitors and member sites."(6)

GeoCities, "the largest and fastest growing Community of personal websites on the Internet,"(7) announced in November of 1998 that it was merging with Starseed and the WebRing system. At that time, WebRing had 66,000 rings and 900,000 member sites.

The most amazing aspect of WebRing is that it is truly a grassroots phenomenon that has remained unscathed through its changes in ownership. After the merger with GeoCities, Starseed assured WebRing's loyal followers that it "will continue to operate WebRing as a division of GeoCities, and WebRing will retain its unique identity."(8) Not only are people free to join and create rings, Starseed asserts that "the WebRing system can support a nearly unlimited number of separate and distinct rings in a unique structure that allows the creation and evolution of tens of thousands of different communities."(9) Just two months after the Starseed and GeoCities merger, Yahoo! acquired GeoCities. Only time will tell what impact this latest shift in ownership will have on Webrings.

The rings are listed by subject and searchable by keyword at Ring World, located at WebRing's Web site (http://webring.com). Visitors and potential ring members browse through this centralized index as a quick means of finding Web sites on subjects of interest. Potential ring owners should do a thorough search of this index before registering a ring. With more than 66,000 rings, it's a good possibility that a subject has been covered, possibly more than once. Even though WebRing encourages participants to limit the number of rings on a single subject, they also refuse to enforce this, stating "we are not limiting the number of Rings on a specific subject because some topics are so diverse."(10)

Webrings and Libraries

Although it's impossible to determine the number of librarians maintaining Webrings as a personal pursuit, there are several rings devoted to libraries and library resources. A good example is the International Medical Libraries on the Web Ring (www.glenlib.demon.co.uk/medlib) maintained by the Glenfield Hospital Medical Library in Leicester, England. The purpose of this ring is to "help bring medical and healthcare libraries spread throughout the world closer together, and that it will lead to a sharing of ideas and maybe even resources."(11) A ring that is open to any library site on the Web is the Ring of Libraries (www.sun.ac. za/local/library/ROL/) maintained by the Computer Services Librarian at the University of Stellenbosch Library in South Africa. An example of a library resources ring is the Government Information Web Ring (www.geocities.com/Athens/6274/ ring.html) maintained by Gall Stern Kwak, government documents librarian at Northwestern State University in Louisiana. A site must contain federal government information to be a member of this ring.

The first step in finding innovative uses for Webrings in libraries is for librarians to tap into existing rings as reference aids and for research. The subjects covered by Webrings are diverse and often focus on specific areas of study found in college and university curriculum yet are rarely used as an information resource in libraries. The Quotation Ring (www.gunnar.cc/webring/ quotes.html), for instance, is one of the few rings cited in an article on information resources available on the Internet.(12) It's possible that a ring already exists within the institution the library supports. There are countless rings devoted to university sports teams, alumni organizations, individual departments, and student organizations. Librarians can utilize students' familiarity with Webrings by showing them how to explore specific topics within these controlled cyber environments and by creating Webrings that meet specific curriculum and study goals.

How Webrings Work

The concept behind Webrings is simple but logical: "Instead of forcing a user to plow through thousands of search engine results to find, say, dinosaur sites, organize dinosaur sites into interlinked `rings,' enabling the surfer to move between sites known to be on the topic."(13) The single topic idea is central to the success of Webrings, the goal

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being "an alternative to the major search engines by offering Web rings as a starting point for locating information."(14)

For a Webring to function, the same navigational information must be on each member site. All of this information is consolidated into a script that WebRing calls the HTMLfragment. This fragment can be customized by the ring manager by adding graphics, different font sizes, faces, and colors; the possibilities are limitless as long as the result is a recognizable representation of the ring. The navigational links work so "visitors can travel all or any of the sites in the ring. They can move through a ring in either direction, going to the next or previous site, or listing the next five sites in the ring. They can jump to a random site in the ring, or survey all the sites that make up the ring."(15) A ring can be entered from any member site just by following the navigational links. So "if you've found a page on a subject you like, and you see a Web ring `block' at the bottom, you can safely assume that following the ring will lead to other pages of interest."(16) (see figure 1)

[Figure 1 ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

The ring manager decides how members' sites join a ring. All rings have a home page that contains the description of the ring and the procedure for joining. Some are invitation only while most are open to anyone with a site that meets the criteria of the ring. A potential member fills out a submission form on the ring home page. Their site is assigned an ID number and put in a queue. They receive an e-mail message instructing them to copy the HTMLfragment and paste it into their Web site, sometimes making minor edits to it reflecting the site's position in the ring. The new member then sends an e-mail to the ring manager saying that the HTMLfragment is in place and that the site can be added to the ring. The ring manager goes into the management area of WebRing where there is a list of Web sites that have been submitted to the queue. The manager visits the new site, checks to see if it meets the criteria for the ring and makes sure the HTMLfragment is correct and that there aren't any other problems. If everything is fine the ring manager adds the site to the ring.

Preliminary Steps to Creating a WebRing

The best Webrings are the ones that have a sharp focus on the ring's topic. They keep the member sites down to a manageable number, and the visitor knows, more or less, what to expect from the other sites in the ring. Rings such as The Cajun Life ring, devoted to "pages of Cajuns/Louisianians who are sharing their culture with everyone"(17) have hundreds of amazingly diverse Web sites on them. Rings like The Abyssinian Cat Ring which is "only for pages that are about Abyssinian Cats,"(18) have enough focus to keep the number of member sites to a manageable number and the subject thread is a strong factor in all the sites.

The first step for anyone who wishes to start a ring is to search through the existing Webrings to see if and how a subject is covered. If there are rings on the subject, take a look at their descriptions and visit the ring's home pages to study their approach. To determine a need for a new ring on a subject, it's a good idea to keep two factors in mind. Although Web sites can be on more than one ring, be sure that this new ring encompasses a set of sites that are not already a part of existing rings. If this isn't possible then perhaps another ring on the subject is not needed. Keep in mind that a ring is an imposition on a member site. It interrupts the layout and design of a site and increases download time. Web site owners may want to limit the number of rings on their sites and will decline an invitation to join another ring for this reason.

Potential ring owners should read through everything at the WebRing home page (http:// webring.com), especially the Help Sections. Understanding WebRings and the philosophy behind them gives the potential ring developer an idea of what managing a Webring involves. WebRing recommends that ring managers possess the following:

1. a good understanding of the World Wide Web and how it works.

2. the ability to create a Web page.

3. a Web account where they can put a Web page.

4. a working e-mail account.(19)

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Add to this an enthusiasm for the subject, the time to devote to managing the ring, and an infinite amount of patience and good humor. Running Webrings involves as much interaction with humans as it does with machines. Unlike composing a list of links, the ring manager not only makes a commitment to the ring itself, but to the member sites on it.

Signing Up a WebRing

The first step in creating a Webring is to register it by filling out the step-by-step form on the WebRing site. Before beginning the process, it's a good idea to have several things decided; a title, a description, keywords, a URL, and an e-mail address are necessary for the completion of the registration form. All of this information can be changed or updated once the ring is registered.

1. Devise a brief but descriptive title for the ring. Look through existing rings for examples of successful and not-so-successful titles. Remember, the titles are indexed alphabetically in Ring World, so if it begins with "the" it will be in the t's. Visitors scanning a list of ring titles often check alphabetically for a subject of interest. So "The Ring of History" might get more visitors and potential members if the title were simply "History Ring."

2. Prepare a description of the ring, fewer than one hundred words. Because this description is displayed as a part of the listing in Ring World, it must be both informative and interesting enough to draw visitors or potential ring members.

3. Compile a list of up to twenty keywords. The combination of the keywords and description are picked up by the internal search engine for Ring World so it might be wise to list keywords not found in the description.

4. Have a URL for the ring. Even if there isn't a site at the address, reserve Web space and a full URL for the future home of the ring. WebRing doesn't house the home page for a ring, just the management pages for it. A ring home page is no different from any other Web page; in fact, many of them are a part of a larger Web site. Many ring managers take advantage of free Web space providers but have to pay the price of banners and pop-up window advertising.

5. Have an e-mail address that you want to use for ring-related business. Since this address is used for all the correspondence and management of the ring, many managers choose to use an address dedicated to the ring. Many sign up with one of the free e-mail services or use the email address that comes with some of the free Web space providers.

The link to the submission form for creating a new ring is embedded in the text on the main page, the Join page, the "What is WebRing" page, and in Section 2 of the Help FAQ.

The sign-up process consists of four steps and takes only a few minutes to fill out if the basic information is prepared beforehand.

Step 1. This step consists of a friendly warning that creating and maintaining a Webring can be time consuming, a lot of work, and requires a good understanding of HTML. It also includes a disclaimer on WebRing's policy on ring content. Although WebRing does not censor rings or ring content, it reserves the right "to deny service to anyone, and terminate/suspend your ring if the system is being abused."(20) These terms must be accepted before proceeding to the second step.

Step 2. The steps seem to be divided into logical parts to build the internal structure of the ring. This step creates a unique identifier for the ring in the form of a Ring ID. "This is a short code that will be used by the system to distinguish your ring from the thousands of others on the system."(21) The Ring ID must be more than two alphanumeric characters, contain no whitespaces, and is case sensitive. It should also be similar to the ring title. For example, the "History Ring" could have a Ring ID of "history" or "historyring."

Step 3. The information needed for this section is the ring title, ring home page URL, your name or organization, an e-mail address, and a password The password is used in conjunction with the Ring ID to access the ring management areas of WebRing.

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Step 4. The information provided in this step is for the ring's listing in Ring World, the directory of WebRings. Since a ring has to have a minimum of five sites to be listed in Ring World, the first question concerns whether it should be automatically listed when the ring has five member sites. There is also the opportunity to indicate the appropriate age group for the site using standard movie ratings. The subject category taken from the Ring World list, the brief description of the ring, and the keywords are also input in this step.

The final step actually takes all the submitted information and creates the Webring. At this point, only the administrative part of the ring is complete. It is then up to the ring manager to create the actual ring.

The Ring Home Page

The main purpose of the home page is to describe and outline the parameters of the Webring and to explain the procedure for joining. Looking through a sample of rings, it is clear that there are as many approaches to ring home pages as there are rings. On some, the Webring is just a small section of the site; on others, the ring is the site. The best place to start is to study different home pages to get an idea of the endless variety and approaches to layout and design.

The Help Sections located at WebRing outline what should be on a home page, but much of it is redundant, unnecessary, and confusing, and ring managers use it only as a starting point. The diversity of ring home pages attests to the freedom allowed in, not only the customization in design and layout, but in which suggested element to include. If it works, the page is successful.

The most difficult part of the ring home page is interpreting the method of conveying the proper information and instructions to a potential new member of the ring. The seven suggestions for what a home page should include are listed in Section 2 of the WebRing Help FAQ:

1. Description of your Ring and qualifications for sites wanting to join.

2. Instructions on how to join.

3. Form for Submitting potential site information.

4. An example of the "HTMLfragment" code.

5. Link to random site in the Ring, and a list of all sites.

6. Link to the Edit Site page.

7. If you are allowing members to add sites to the ring, a link to the Queue.(22)

A detailed look at these suggestions can help alleviate some common problems that plague many ring home pages.

1. Description of your ring and qualifications for sites wanting to join. The description should be as precise as possible in expressing the parameters of the ring. For example, if the ring is only for non-commercial sites or if the subject area is limited in a specific way, this should be clearly stated. The more vague the parameters for membership, the greater the misinterpretation by potential members.

Some rings are invitation only, which places all the work of building the ring on the ring manager. Every potential member site has to be located by the manager. Invitations to join the ring must then be composed, sent out, and, if the manager is lucky, responded to. One of the major problems with invitation-only rings is convincing reluctant Web site owners to join.

The most common approach to building ring membership is to allow unsolicited submissions, which the ring manager can approve or reject. If the ring is open to submissions, there should be a submission form on the ring home page.

2. Instructions on how to join. This is probably the most confusing part of building a ring home page because WebRing presents several suggestions of what to do, and does not state that they are really options from which to choose. As a result, many home pages have redundant, confusing, and even contradictory instructions and

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explanations. The more complicated the process of joining a ring appears to be, the more reluctant some potential members may be to join. Basically the instructions should include:

a. Instructions on how to submit a site to the ring. In the simplest case, these instructions are variations on "fill out the submission form below." It might be a good idea to explain that filling out the form does not automatically add the site to the ring, but places it in a queue until the submission process is complete. To be really thorough, an explanation of the difference between a queue and a ring can be included, although this may be too much detail for visitors who are only interested in the parts of the procedure they have to perform.

b. A description of what happens after the form is submitted. This depends on how well the ring manager understands the process. Following WebRing's suggestions to the letter creates an extremely complicated interpretation of the submission process. The best solution is to work out a logical procedure using the basic necessary steps. This part of the instructions should be a variation on: "When you submit the form, you'll receive an e -mail with your Site ID number and the URL for the HTMLfragment that needs to be pasted into your Web site." The ring manager also has the option to set a time limit for how long a site can remain in a queue before being automatically deleted; this should be clearly stated in the instructions.

c. Instructions on how the HTMLfragment should be added to the member site. Some members specifically ask that the fragment be placed on the site's main page, while others allow the placement to fit into the logical layout of the site.

d. Instructions on how to handle graphics in the HTMLfragment. Graphics can be accessed from the ring manager's server or downloaded and added to the member site's server. Some Web space providers have limitations on the traffic to a site, and putting the graphic on the member's server not only saves bandwidth, but sometimes an extra expense for the ring manager. Include instructions on how to download the graphics for both PCs and Macs.

e. Instructions on what to do after the HTMLfragment has been added to the member site. This is basically a variation on: "When you have added the HTMLfragment to your site, upload the page to your server and send me an e-mail letting me know that your site is ready to be checked and added to the ring." If a site remains in a queue too long, it might be prudent to check to see of the HTMLfragment is on it. Sometimes Web site owners forget to send the e-mail message.

3. Form for submitting potential site information. The HTML code for the submission form is provided by WebRing. It can be pasted onto the home page and customized as much or as little as desired. It's a good idea, especially for those not used to working with CGI forms, to paste the generic form into the page and take a look at the results through a browser before making changes to it. This shows what sections of the script go where on the form and prevents accidental tampering with the essential parts of the script. It also helps determine how to place the form into the overall design of the page (see figure 2).

[Figure 2 ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

4. An example of the HTMLfragment code. Including the HTMLfragment on the home page can be confusing because it is not the code that is meant to be pasted into the member site. That fragment is provided in an e-mail message to the potential member and includes the information assigned specifically to that site. If the only purpose of displaying the fragment on the page is to show what it looks like, then that purpose must be clearly stated. Unfortunately, the reason for displaying the fragment is not made clear in the instructions to ring managers, so many home pages state that the fragment is for pasting into a member site. There is nothing wrong with this, but it creates a lot of unnecessary work for both the new member and the ring manager, who has to instruct the new member to customize the code. Many ring managers choose not to display the HTMLfragment on the home page because it is redundant and can cause confusion.

5. Link to random site in the ring, and list of all sites. This is only necessary if the ring home page is not a part of the ring. The ring home page has to be added to the ring like any other member site. A benefit of adding the home page is that it gives the ring manager the opportunity to check the submission process from beginning to end, making sure all the customized e-mail messages, etc., work as anticipated. As a part of the ring, the home page has the same

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block of text and graphics representing the ring as its member sites, including all of the navigational options and a full list of member sites.

6. Link to the Edit Site page. When a site is submitted to the queue, the follow-up e-mail message not only reiterates the site information but includes the URL to the Edit Site page. This is where information entered in the submission form can be modified. Putting the ability for a ring member to access their Edit Site page on the ring home page is a convenience in case the member does not retain the follow-up e-mail message. The link can either be a small form that asks for the member Site ID and password to gain entrance to the page or a link to the same form on the WebRing site.

7. If you are allowing members to add sites to the Ring, a link to the Queue. Some ring managers have members who help manage the ring. This link allows these members into the queue so they can add sites to the ring.

Perhaps the most difficult part of creating a Webring is devising the block of text and graphics that represent the ring on each of the member sites. The actual text is standard, for the most part, since it involves the navigational links for the ring. How the text is arranged and factors such as font type, color, and size can be customized. Many rings have one or two graphics that represent the subject. There are several things to keep in mind when devising these graphics. First, keep them small but recognizable since they will impact on the download time of a page. Second, consider making parts of an image transparent because it has to fit against every conceivable background color and image. Lastly, try to create something that will work with as many design and color schemes as possible; the ring is meant to be visible, not obtrusive. The design can be as creative as the ring manager's imagination, as long as the site's navigation is clear.

E-mail and Page Forms

To make the ring home page work as efficiently as possible, the e-mail messages and pages that are automatically generated during the submission and acceptance process need special customization. These forms can be accessed through the ring management pages at WebRing. Requiring the most attention are the HTMLfragment and the add_mail message.

The HTMLfragment is the heart of the ring, and the logistics for getting a new member to correctly paste it into a site sometimes seem more complicated than they really are. Unfortunately, the most confusing instructions on how to build a Webring concern the HTMLfragment. Barring the few who "just don't get it" even when the instructions and the procedure are painfully simple, most people who have managed to put at least one site on the Web can, at least, recognize the code. Given the number of member sites on rings with complicated and confusing instructions, most Web site owners have enough knowledge to figure out and understand the process, sometimes better than the ring manager. The ideal situation is to make the process as simple as possible for both the ring manager and the new member. Customizing the HTMLfragment form and letting it be the only version of the fragment that the new member has access to is the simplest approach.

The HTMLfragment is the code for the block of text and graphics that represent the ring. Once it has been customized for the ring, copy it and paste it into the HTMLfragment form found on the Customizable Forms page in the ring management section of WebRing. The trick is to retain the default variables so that when a new member accesses the fragment from a special URL provided for them, it will automatically include all the information from the member site. This means that the fragment can be pasted into their site without any changes.

The raw HTMLfragment contains just the essentials for ensuring that the ring's navigational links work properly (see figure 3). Customization should only affect the design and layout of the code. Although the ring manager has the option to exclude all of the navigational links, the parts of the code that allow the ring to operate must not be altered (see figure 4). When the fragment has been customized, paste it into the HTMLfragment form. When a new member submits a site, the system pulls this form into a page created for the new member and fills in the variables for "--mail--", "name-", and "--id--" with the information from the submission form. The new member simply copies the URL provided in the follow-up e-mail message and pastes it into their page (see figure 5).

[Figures 3-5 ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

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To ensure that the above scenario works smoothly, the add_mail message sent to a potential member after the site information is submitted has to be customized. It contains a summary of the information submitted for the ring and instructions on what to do next. It also contains the URL to the Edit Site page and to the page containing the HTML-fragment. The generic add_mail form is a hodgepodge of instructions to both the new member and the ring manager (see figure 6).

[Figure 6 ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

Any word between two dashes is a variable that is filled in with information from the submission form and from the ring manager's profile. For example, the top portion for the member site may read:

```
Your site has been successfully submitted to the My Favorite Ring for
review. Your Ring information is listed below. Please save this email for
future reference as it contains important information.

Ring Name: My Favorite Ring

Ring ID: myring

RingMaster: Ring Manager's Name Ring manager@ myplace.com

Site ID: 23

Password: pass (don't forget this!)

Title: Member Site Title

URL: freespace.net/ myfreespace--(this should be your webpage and will be
the page you add your HTMLfragment to)

E-mail: me@freespace.net

Password: pass (No, really ... don't forget this or your Site ID, which is
23 and your Ring ID which is myring)
```

The next section explains what needs to be done to add the member site to the ring.

```
Please note that your site has NOT been added to the ring yet. Standard
steps to become a member of any WebRing are as follows:

a. Submit your site (you've already done this). You are now in the
RingMaster's "queue"

b. Add the correct HTMLfragment to your webpage then email
manager@myplace.com

c. RingMaster reviews correctness of your HTMLfragment

d. RingMaster adds you to the ring

e. Traffic to your site increases!:)
```

If the information above is incorrect, you can edit your site information by entering your Site ID 23 and password pass at the URL

```
http://www.webring.org/ cgi-bin/webring?ring=23;edit
```


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The next part of the e-mail message requires modification to make the submission process as simple as possible.

```
he   Mfragment to cut and paste on your homepage should be shown below.
owe er  please note it is possible the  ingMaster for-My  a orite  ing has
not configured their   Mfragment within the Webring system in which case
the   Mfragment below will say   his is a generic  default
 Mfragment-modify me or remo e this line.   f this is the case  you
should find instructions for obtaining and editing the   Mfragment
manually on the My  a orite  ing homepage  at http://myplace.com/ myring.

http://www.webring.org / cgi-bin / webring ring -- ringid-- id 23 htmlcode

Please do not email Web ing Support Ser ices to be added to this ring.
the  ingMaster can add your site.  f you ha e  uestions regarding your
membership in this ring  please address them to the  ingMaster
(ringmanager myplace.com).
```

This is the most confusing part of the instructions for both the ring manager and the new member. The fact is, even if the ring manager modifies the HTMLfragment form and pastes it into the e-mail message so that it displays to the new member, the member still has to add their site ID, e-mail address and name to the fragment when they paste it into their page. If the new member simply selects the URL http://www. webring.org/cgi-bin/web ring? ring=--ringid--;id=--id--;html-code, they will get the modified code with all the information from the member site. So instead of looking something like this:

```
ere is the   Mfragment to cut and paste on your homepage:

 -- Begin   M comment

his is an   Mfragment to be pasted onto your Web site for the My  a orite
ing Web ing.  t is what lin s you to the rest of the ring. :)

nd   M comment --

p

center

his  a href  --ringurl--  -- ringtitle-- /a  site owned by

a hre  mailto:--mail--   --name-- /a . br  img src  myringlogo.gif   br

 a hre  http://www. webring.org/cgi-bin/ webring ring --ringid-- id --
id-- pre 5  Pre ious 5 Sites /a

 a hre  http://www. webring.org/cgi-bin/ webring ring --ringid-- id
--id-- pre   Pre ious /a   a href  http://www. webring.org/cgi-bin/
webring ring --ringid-- id  --id-- ne t  e t /a

 a hre  http://www. webring.org/cgi-bin/ webring ring --ringid-- id --
id-- ne t5  e t 5 Sites /a

 a hre  http://www. webring.org/cgi-bin/ webring ring --ringid--
random  andom Site /a
```


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```
|<a href="http://www. web ring. org / cgi-bin / webring?ring=--ringid
--;list">List Sites</a> ]

</center>

<p>

You should find instructions for obtaining and editing the HTMLfragment
manually on the My Favorite Ring homepage, at http://myplace.com/ myring.

The HTMLfragment with your site specifications is also available at:

http://www.webring.org/ cgi-bin/webring?ring=-- ringid--;id=23;htmlcode
```

The message can be streamlined into this:

```
The HTMLfragment can be found at the following URL:

http://www.webring.org/ cgi-bin/webring?ring= smithring;id=23;htmlcode

Your e-mail address, name, and site ID should be already inserted into the
code. All you have to do is copy the code and paste it into your site. Then
send me an e-mail letting me know your site is ready to be added to the
ring.
```

Not only is this message easier for the new member to understand, it also makes it easier for the ring manager to explain what to do if there is a problem.

The other forms generated by the system for the new member include the page shown after a site has been submitted to the queue, the e-mail message sent after a site has been inserted into the ring, and notification messages when a site will be removed from a queue. All these forms can be customized, reflecting the general tone and layout of the ring home page.

Managing the Ring

Once the ring home page is in place and the forms are customized, the ring is ready to be launched. However, since a ring is not a Webring until it has a number of member sites on it, the first step is to announce its existence. This can be done in a number of different ways and, in the beginning, the more the better. The most direct method is to compile a list of suitable Web sites to invite to join the ring. This can be time consuming but helps build an immediate foundation for the ring. The ring can be registered with search engines just like any other Web site, and this may pull in general visitors and the occasional potential member. Posting announcements to message boards and mailing lists that cover the subject of the ring will probably yield the best results for quick growth spurts. Once the ring has a respectable number of member sites, the sites themselves become a form of advertisement. The listing in Ring World as well attracts a number of potential members.

The ring manager has access to a group of management pages for the ring. This is where all the customizable forms, ring statistics, the queue, and everything else relating to the management of the ring reside. It's a good idea to become familiar with these pages since a lot of potential questions are answered within them.

The ring manager can see the sites in the queue but cannot take any action on them, except maybe to reject them because they don't meet the guidelines for the ring, until an email message is sent from a potential member letting the manager know that the HTMLfragment has been added to the new site. The listing in the queue looks like this:

```
[Edit] | [Add] | [Remove] 020 My Really Great Site - me@ mysite.com (My
Name)
```

To add a site, the manager selects the link to the site and checks it for appropriateness and for errors in the HTMLfragment. A solid knowledge of HTML and of how to access the source code of a Web page is necessary. The

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ring manager must be able to spot errors in the HTMLfragment and write clear instructions on how to correct them. It cannot be assumed that a person who managed to create and post a Web site understands HTML. The other extreme are those who are secure in their HTML skills and freely customize the code. It's up to the ring manager to decide whether the graphics and texts in the Ring must be uniform on each site or if they can be adapted to the overall design of the site as long as it's still recognizable. If the HTML code is correct, the manager returns to the ring management page and selects "add." The information from the member's submission form is displayed in case it needs correcting. Check to make sure that "http://" is in front of the URL. This is commonly left out and is necessary for the navigational links of the ring to work properly. If everything is correct the site is added to the ring.

As the ring grows, periodic integrity checks are necessary. On large rings, managers enlist the help of the members to check the sites on either side of their own or take on helpers to add sites and check the links. There is a ringmasters' mailing list for those who want to interact with other ring managers. Many questions and problems are discussed on this list. WebRing also compiles statistics on traffic to the individual sites on a ring and within the ring itself. These statistics are useful is making sure all the sites in a ring receive an equal amount of traffic. If it appears as though only parts of the ring are getting the majority of hits, a ring manager has the option of rearranging the order of the sites.

Conclusion

Being a ring manager can be a rewarding or frustrating experience. Dedication to the subject of the ring and a commitment to the purpose can make managing a ring a very satisfactory experience. The potential for their use as an educational or collection development tool has barely been tapped. It is up to librarians to decide how to fashion Webrings into an alternative method of offering Internet resources to patrons. Webrings can be used as subject extensions of library collections or be tailored to cover the specific resources for individual courses. No matter what they are created for, Webrings can take the waste out of searching the Internet and create a unique surfing experience for the student and patron.

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Public displays of connection

J Donath and d boyd

Participants in social network sites create self-descriptive profiles that include their links to other members, creating a visible network of connections — the ostensible purpose of these sites is to use this network to make friends, dates, and business connections. In this paper we explore the social implications of the public display of one's social network. Why do people display their social connections in everyday life, and why do they do so in these networking sites? What do people learn about another's identity through the signal of network display? How does this display facilitate connections, and how does it change the costs and benefits of making and brokering such connections compared to traditional means? The paper includes several design recommendations for future networking sites.

1. Introduction

'Orkut [1] is an on-line community that connects people through a network of trusted friends'

'Find the people you need through the people you trust' — LinkedIn [2].

'Access people you want to reach through people you know and trust. Spoke Network helps you cultivate a strong personal network by keeping you in touch with your relationships' — Spoke [3].

'Friendster Beta [4]: The new way to meet people. Friendster is an on-line community that connects people through networks of friends for dating or making new friends'.

Social networking sites, in which participants create a self-descriptive profile and make links to other members, have recently become quite popular. 'Networking' is the ostensible purpose of these sites — using one's chain of connections to make new friends, dates, business partners, etc. Underlying all the networking sites are a core set of assumptions — that there is a need for people to make more connections, that using a network of existing connections is the best way to do so, and that making this easy to do is a great benefit.

The first dedicated on-line networking site was sixdegrees.com, which, like today's social networking sites, helped people connect to an extended network of friends of friends and beyond. Sixdegrees.com folded after four years in operation. Since then, use of the Internet has greatly expanded and today it is much more likely that one's friends and the people one would like to befriend are present in cyberspace. People are accustomed to thinking of the on-line world as a social space. Today, networking sites are suddenly extremely popular.

Social networks — our connections with other people — have many important functions. They are sources of emotional and financial support, and of information about jobs, other people, and the world at large. The types of social networks that develop in different communities have a profound effect on the way people work, the opportunities they have, and the structure of their daily life [5, 6]. There are societies in which network ties reflect a rigid hierarchy and close kinship relationships, and others in which they reflect a mobile culture structured around work and school. Today, we are seeing the advent of social networks formed in cyberspace. People meet in on-line forums and through on-line dating services; they keep in touch with an unprecedentedly large number of people via electronic media.

> people are accustomed to thinking of the on-line world as a social space

In today's society, access to information is a key element of status and power and communication is instant, ubiquitous and mobile. The social networking sites we will be discussing in this paper are a product of this emerging culture. They

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function both as environments in which these new ties are formed and as depictions of these networks in the display of individual connections.

Social networking sites are on-line environments in which people create a self-descriptive profile and then make links to other people they know on the site, creating a network of personal connections. Participants in social networking sites are usually identified by their real names and often include photographs; their network of connections is displayed as an integral piece of their self-presentation.

The public display of connections is one of the most salient features of the social sites. The focus of this paper is on the social implications of this display. Why do people display their social connections in everyday life — and why do they do so in these networking sites? What do people learn about another's identity through the signal of network display? How does this display facilitate connections, and how does it change the costs and benefits of making and brokering such connections as opposed to doing so via traditional means?

The profile and network of links are the fundamental features of these sites, but the specific instantiation varies from site to site. The examples and observations in this paper are drawn from several contemporary services, including Friendster [4], Orkut [1], Tribe.net [7], Ryze [8] and LinkedIn [2]. These sites undergo frequent redesign and new ones appear often; thus, while we have grounded our analysis on observation [9], we try to speak generally about approaches to design.

Most networking sites share a similar model of interpersonal links — they are mutual, public, unnuanced, and decontextualised:

- links are mutual: if A shows B as a connection, then B has also agreed to show A as a connection,
- the links are public: they are permanently on display for others to see — here, the sites do differ, e.g. LinkedIn allows you to see only the connections made by your immediate links, and only if they allow it, whereas Orkut allows users to explore freely, and others limit network viewings to a still more broad class of friends of friends of friends,
- the links are unnuanced: there is no distinction made between a close relative and a near stranger one chatted with idly on-line one night,
- the links are decontextualised: there is no way of showing only a portion of one's network to some people — some sites do allow users to adjust the closeness by degree of the people who are to be allowed to see their connections, and within that degree everyone can see all connections (there is no ability to segregate one's links), and similarly for one's profile, and a few sites allow limiting parts of the profile to closer connections, but again connection degree is the only distinction made.

The features of the links in the displays of connection — that are public, mutual, unnuanced, and decontextualised — shape the culture that is evolving on these sites.

2. What does the display of connections mean?

In the physical world, people display their connections in many ways. They have parties in which they introduce friends who they think would like — or impress — each other [10, 11]. They drop the names of high status acquaintances casually in their conversation. They decorate their refrigerator with photos. Simply appearing in public with one's acquaintances is a display of connection. These displays serve various purposes. The high status name-dropping may be a deliberate ploy to impress the listener of the speaker's importance or ability to effect some action. The refrigerator display may be prompted by the good feeling engendered by memories of pleasant times with friends [12]. The introductions may be done as a favour, as a way of gaining social capital, or as a way of uniting compatible but disconnected circles [10].

social status, political beliefs, musical taste, etc, may be inferred from the company one keeps

Seeing someone within the context of their connections provides the viewer with information about them. Social status, political beliefs, musical taste, etc, may be inferred from the company one keeps. Furthermore, knowing that someone is connected to people one already knows and trusts is one of the most basic ways of establishing trust with a new relationship [13, 14]. The reliability of the inferences drawn from these displays varies. The social climber who is continuously dropping the names of famous friends may be taking advantage of the listener's inability to verify the stories to create an impressive but imaginary resumé. An intimate dinner party in which the guests are clearly familiar with the host tells much more about the host's social circle than does a giant loft party where the attendees are only vaguely aware of the evening's provenance. The friends depicted in photos on the refrigerator are likely to be just that — but there does exist a market in faux family photos and other material meant to create the impression of aspired to life and history [15]. How important is the reliability of the information gleaned from the display of connections depends on what one is planning to do with it. If one is simply being entertained by a celebrity-laced story, suspension of disbelief is harmless. Yet, if one is being recruited for an investment scheme the desirability of which is based on claims of association with the rich and famous, a deeper analysis would be sensible.

A useful way of analysing the reliability of displays of connections is to think of them in the framework of signalling theory. This theory, developed in both biology [16—18] and economics [19, 20], describes the relationship between a signal and the underlying quality it represents. Most of the qualities we are interested in about other people — Is this person nice? Trustworthy? Can she do this job? Can he be relied on in an emergency? Would she be a good parent? — are not directly observable. Instead, we rely on signals, which are more or less reliably correlated with an underlying quality.

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Some signals, often termed honest or assessment signals are inherently reliable because they are costly in terms of the quality they are signalling [18]. For example, a fast and energetic gazelle will exhibit a behaviour called 'stotting' when it sees a predator. Instead of running off, it jumps up and down in place, expending a lot of energy and wasting time. This is a reliable signal of its great speed, for a slower animal could not afford to do this and still outrun the predator. Sometimes, the expense of producing and/or assessing a costly signal is too high, and a less costly but also less reliable signal is used [16]. Such signals are often called conventional signals, because the connection between signal and quality exists by convention rather than necessity. For example, driving an expensive car is a signal of wealth, for to own such a car is quite costly in the domain being signalled, in this case money. Yet a car can be rented and thus a person who is unable to afford to buy a late model Jaguar may still be able to drive one around for a few days. If, however, we add the cost of time for extensive observation, we can increase the reliability of the signal. Seeing someone driving the Jaguar month after month is a more reliable signal of their ownership of it than is a single sighting. If one is only casually interested in the financial status of the driver, a long term investment of time in observing them is unnecessary and undesirable and one is likely to be satisfied with the possibly unreliable information gleaned from the less costly signal of a single observation. If the costs of being mistaken are high, then it is worthwhile to invest in the cost of the assessment signal, which in this case is the monetary investment of the driver and the temporal investment of both driver and observer.

the reliability of social connections can be analysed in terms of signalling theory

There is another important source of costs in determining the reliability of a signal and that is reputation and the ability of receivers to punish deceivers. In a system where interactions are not repeated and there is no communication within a community, receivers must rely on the signal alone. Yet in a situation in which there is persistent identity and repeated interaction, receivers can punish deceivers through the social mechanism of reputation. Here, the information gleaned through experience by an individual can spread through a community. The deceptive signaller then pays a cost in terms of difficulty in finding future interaction partners, etc. This is an important concept in evaluating social networking displays, for they place the individual within a social context that fosters co-operation through the structure of reputation maintenance.

Signalling theory focuses our analysis of the displays of connection in social networking sites on questions such as: What are the qualities that are being represented by the signal of the network display? What are the costs of producing these displays? What are the benefits that can come from them? What are the receivers attempting to discern? What are the costs they will bear if the signal is deceptive? It also focuses our attention on the signalling value of the network itself — what are the implications of an articulated social network, that is, a network in which the connections are explicitly depicted, in terms of reputation and the costs that a deceived receiver can impart?

3. Displaying connections to verify personal identity and ensure co-operation

A public display of connections is an implicit verification of identity. In order to understand the significance of this, we start by briefly discussing how widespread less reliable identity representations are in the on-line world. We then discuss two predictions that can be made about the effect of a public display of connections. First, since one's connections are linked to one's profile, which they have presumably viewed and implicitly verified, it should ensure honest self-presentation. Secondly, since the display makes one's connections and the means of contacting them public, it should ensure co-operative behaviour by putting one's reputation on the line with all transactions, for an unhappy date or client, etc, can easily contact the connections. The section concludes with a discussion of displays of connection and identity theft.

3.1 Verifying personal identity

Identity deception is prevalent in the on-line world. In the real world the body anchors identity, making it both singular and difficult to change. Identity deception, though not unheard of, is difficult — convincingly representing oneself as a member of the opposite gender is quite costly, requiring extensive makeup, costuming, and possibly surgery, while portraying oneself as a different person requires acquiring another's documents, avoiding known acquaintances, and risking a lengthy incarceration. On-line, identity is mutable and unanchored by the body that is its locus in the real world [21]. In many situations, creating pseudonyms has little cost and if one ruins the on-line reputation tied to one screen name, it is simple to acquire a new name and return afresh [22]. Behind the new name is the same problematic person, but the equivalence between the disreputable old name and the clean new name — the fact that they are both names for the same person — is invisible.

In some situations, such as game playing, the ease of creating imaginary personas and unsullied pseudonyms is acceptable. But for many purposes, such as providing support, exchanging goods and services, finding friends and seeking employees, it is not. Here, the cost of being deceived can be quite high, and it is worthwhile for people to assume and demand greater costs in order to be more confident in their belief in the other's identity.

A public display of connections can be viewed as a signal of the reliability of one's identity claims. If I write a description of myself for strangers to read, it is easy to prevaricate. Yet if I take that description and ask a number of people who know me to link to it and implicitly vet it, this should increase the reliability of the description. In theory, the public display of connections found on networking sites should ensure honest self-presentation because one's connections are linked to

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one's profile; they have both seen it and, implicitly, sanctioned it.

A comparison of identity presentation in contexts with and without social networks can be made by comparing social networking sites and dating sites. Both are used to find dates and both feature self-written profiles. They differ in that the dating sites are pseudonymous and have no display of connection while the network sites feature real names and displays of connection. Dating sites are thriving, with millions of users reportedly every month [23]. Yet there have also been numerous reports of identity deception in such sites, ranging from the relatively innocuous misrepresentation of personal appearance and achievements, to more serious deceptions about marital status and intentions. The costs of creating a deceptive dating site profile are relatively low and are often not in the domain being advertised. For example, stating 'I am a kind, thoughtful and romantic person' does not impose any costs on one's kindness or romantic nature and requires little thought. Social networking sites should be more reliable. The use of one's real name and the network both imply that if one were to prevaricate extensively in one's profile, real acquaintances would see this and presumably, make some rebuke — or at least, one would be embarrassed to be seen exaggerating accomplishments in front of one's friends. More serious deceptions, such as a married person posing as an available single, are far more difficult to perform in a networking site. In order to remain innocent in the eyes of one's friends and family one would need to create a new persona and then surround oneself with invented friends and very weak ties or would need to appear as acutely alone. Appearing on a networking site with a full network of acquaintances is a relatively reliable signal that one's participation on the site is within the boundaries of acceptable behaviour within that network.

Does this mean that the display of connections on social networking sites makes the presentation of identity in these environments very reliable? If the connections listed on the profile were always a) real people who b) knew the subject and c) would impose sanctions on false self-portrayals, then yes, these sites would be quite reliable. Yet these assumptions do not always hold.

- Real people

  It is possible that the connections listed are not real people. There is often little or no verification of people when they sign up to join most networking sites. It is easy to create a false persona; the costs lie in building the network. The determined deceiver can create a series of false profiles and have them link to each other, creating the illusion of a network of well-connected participants. The cost here is the effort required to create these multiple personas. This cost is dependent on the registration requirements of the site and sites that make registration more difficult raise the cost and lower the likelihood of such deception. Today, most sites are free. Some require an invitation from an existing member, but it would be possible simply to invite the made-up profiles oneself. A site that requires an invitation from an existing member AND that keeps the host member's name on the invitee's profile (which is seldom if ever done today) would make the cost of creating a circle of deception higher, by making it possible to trace the chain of links to a real person. While such elaborate deceptions are rare, if the benefits of creating a believable but false persona are high enough, it is likely that they will occur. Sites that value their own reputation as a place where people can find trustworthy others should be cognisant of the value of registration costs and of maintaining invitation chains.

- Who knew the subject

  It is possible that the connections are real people, but that they do not know the subject. The culture of the networking sites varies. In some, it is common for strangers to happen upon an interesting profile, and contact the person requesting a connection; in others, it is common for people to link only to others they do know. Linking to externally unknown people became so common on Friendster that the phrase 'she's not my friend, she's my friendster' [9] arose to explain the relationship one has with a person known only through that site. This is not inherently bad — after all, the social sites are designed to help people meet and linking to one another is the obvious action to take upon introduction in this environment. The drawback is that this ease of meeting means that the degree of acquaintanceship signified by a link may be very minimal. If the people on someone's display of connections do not know the subject in real life, they have no way to verify the profile — they, like the receiver, know only the on-line presentation and thus they do not add new information. One cost here is that it can take more effort to get strangers to agree to link to you than real friends; friends, upon receiving the link request, are likely to say yes (the cost of establishing the relationship has already been paid) whereas a stranger is more likely to refuse such requests. What would make someone agree to link to a complete stranger? One possibility is that they simply want more links — perhaps they are a newcomer to the site and feel conspicuous in the small size of their network or they may be one of the participants who is seeking to build as large a network as they can. Another possibility is that the link seeker has created a particularly intriguing profile and people agree to link to it — or even seek out links with it — because it is so well crafted or features an aesthetic or political viewpoint they wish to espouse. By paying the cost of carefully crafting an interesting profile one can make more connections. Here we see how the various meanings of a link can be conflated by different participants — a link may be made in response to appreciation of a witty entry, and yet be interpreted as meaning that the linked people know each other.

  Furthermore, a connection may know the subject, but not all aspects of his or her personality, work history, etc. Relationships are contextual — a friend known as a supportive shoulder to lean on may not be recognisable as the ruthless poker player or somewhat lax manager he or she also is. Identity is faceted [24]; we have different interests, beliefs, traits, etc, and share different ones with different people. Feld's [10] formulation of how networks form uses the word 'focus' to encompass the different

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situations, people, ideas, etc, that bring people together. These foci, he pointed out, organise the structure of social networks because they are the circumstances and reasons people meet each other and form ties with each other. The type of information that flows through a tie, whether about the person or about the world at large, depends on the focus that brought them together and on the shared facets of their identity.

The subject's profile may touch upon various facets of his or her identity, and those who are displayed as links may know only some of these. Other claims in the profile may be untrue, yet unquestioned by friends and colleagues, who may simply assume this is an aspect of their acquaintance about which they do not know.

LinkedIn has developed an interesting approach to recognising the focused natured of people's connections. Like several other sites, it includes testimonials, which are comments people write about the subject and which appear alongside the profile and display of connections (see Fig 1 for a sample User Profile page). Unlike links, these need not be reciprocal. They are almost invariably complimentary, since they are displayed at the discretion of the subject (though notions of what is complimentary is quite context dependent). On LinkedIn, these testimonials are situated in specific sections of the profile, rather than as general comments. This is a professional site, aimed at business connections, so the profile sections correspond to different jobs; the testimonials speak about the work the subject did at each work place. The endorsement of one aspect of the profile does not imply any knowledge about the rest. As we will discuss later in this paper, there are a number of reasons for making a self-presentation more faceted; these situated testimonials are a step in that direction.

- Who would impose sanctions

Finally, it is possible that the connections are real people, and they know the subject and know that the profile is deceptive, but they do not care. The culture of the networking sites varies. Some are more playful and participants may see them as an environment for performative expression. On Orkut, a law professor lists his career skills as 'small appliance repair', his career interests as 'large appliance repair'. To those who know him, the joke is obvious. Presented on a site where people often creatively embellish their profiles we can see it not as a deceptive self-description, but as a signal of the author's dry humour[1]. Other sites, such as LinkedIn, are quite business-like and emphasise one's personal responsibility in vouching for another person. Here, a clearly deceptive statement, such as claiming a higher title at a previous job than was actually held, might indeed be challenged.

3.2 *Ensuring co-operation*

Yet confrontation is difficult. It is easier to ignore such actions, especially when acting as an individual. But social groups have

[1] In fact, Orkut features the category 'sense of humour' as a line in everyone's main profile, with the multiple choice answers including 'obscure', 'clever/quick witted', 'raunchy', etc. Note that this description of one's humour is a conventional signal, with no cost in that domain. Creative and funny use of the profile, however, is a much more reliable signal of one's wit, even as it becomes a less reliable description at face value.

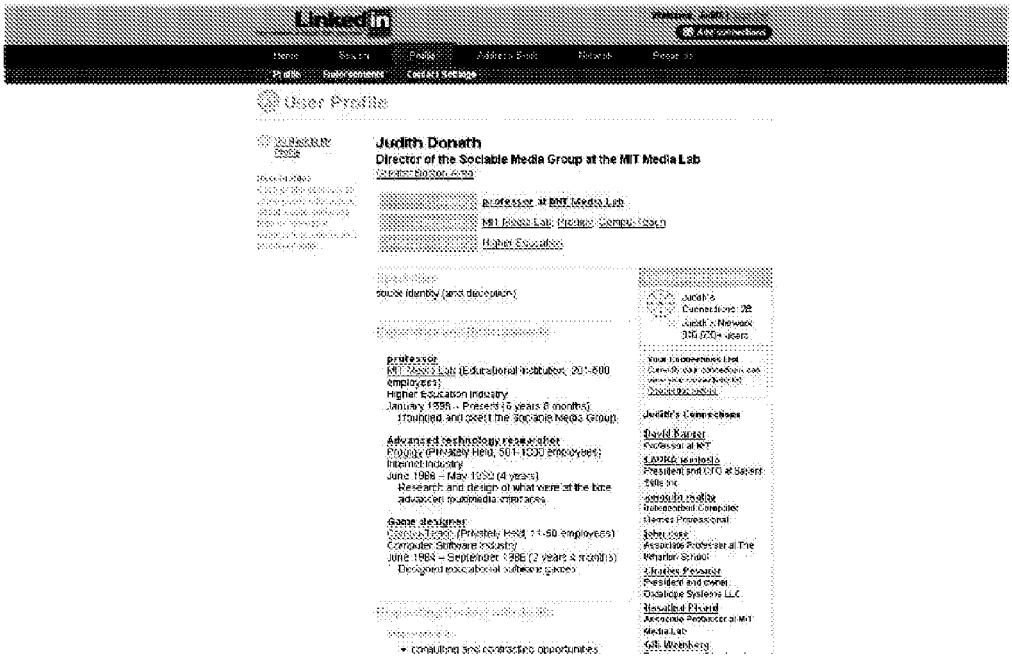


Fig 1 Sample LinkedIn user profile page.

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considerable power in enforcing norms. The power of reputation to enforce co-operative behaviour lies not in confrontation with the subject, but in conversation surrounding him.

Displaying connections is a way of signalling a willingness to risk one's reputation. In the real world, as Burt [13] has pointed out, reputation is a powerful force in groups with dense affiliations. This can be due to repeated interactions — we gather a reputation around our identity that, if good, is quite valuable and we benefit from continuing to act in ways that enhance that reputation. But it can also be due to having mutual acquaintances — he cites Granovetter who says that the 'mortification' at having mutual friends discover one's poor behaviour towards another friend is 'unbearable' [25]. A public display of connections, listed along with contact information, arguably provides all viewers of one's network site profile with a virtual set of mutual acquaintances.

a public display of connections can help someone else establish that they are you

In the pseudonymous dating scene, a frequent complaint is that people act rudely towards each other in ways that they would not do to people they knew in a more integrated social environment. A common complaint concerns dates who break off communication with no explanation, as well as dates who behave boorishly in person. By publicly displaying connections, one provides others with a means of getting in touch with one's circle of friends and acquaintances. One is less likely to treat a date rudely when they are equipped with contact information for many of one's friends. Similarly, poor behaviour is a problem in many on-line discussion forums, where pseudonymity and disconnection provide cover for angry or malicious postings. Several of the social networking sites, such as Orkut and Tribe.net, include user created discussion forums. Here, the participants can be seen in the context of their on-line social network, a context that provides accountability.

The cost of this accountability is a reduction in privacy. The pseudonymous dating sites give people at least the illusion that none of their friends need know how much they would like to find a mate; the pseudonymous forums allow people to express opinions or ask questions on topics that they prefer their acquaintances not know. In the social networking sites, one acts in the company of friends and acquaintances. The security of the named and networked systems comes at the cost of reduced privacy.

The value of the display of connections for ensuring co-operation depends upon the type of connection they represent. If they are vague acquaintances, people known only in the context of the virtual world, there may be little repercussion for poor behaviour, even if the victim complains to the subject's list of contacts. Still, for many people, having bad things said about them, even to distant acquaintances, would be painful and embarrassing. Knowing that everyone they interact with knows of and can communicate with a group of their acquaintances can influence their behaviour. The public display of connections places them in a still virtual, but now public, space.

3.3 Identity theft

The public display of connections can help verify that you are who you say you are. But it can also help someone else establish that they are you, too.

In the face-to-face world, people signal status and seek common ground by selectively divulging information about their own social network.

Name dropping is used to position oneself in a status hierarchy. People may claim connections to celebrities or other high-status people to raise their own status. Here, the goal is not to seek mutual acquaintances but to impress. Such claims to the proximity of fame are often questionable, for once the signaller ascertains that the receiver does not know the famous person he may feel free to make stronger claims of friendship, weaving them with unverifiable yet convincing details.

Name display is also used to discover whether there is a common bond between new acquaintances. People who lived in the same city or attended the same school may go through long lists of names seeking common ground. They find cues about the other's social position in both the lack and presence of mutual acquaintances. There is seldom a question of the veracity of the friendship claims to non-celebrities. If you do not know them, then my claim of friendship with them is meaningless to you and if you do know them, you will be able to easily discover that my claim is false.

Both of these displays of social connection rely on the premise that one's social network is, while not secret, not public either.

John Guare's play 'Six Degrees of Separation' [26], based on the true story of David Hampton [27], is about the power of name-dropping and deceptive display of social network information. The central character is an imposter, Paul, who manoeuvres his way into the lives of several wealthy families with the claim of a close connection to a very famous celebrity and by displaying detailed social network information about their children. Paul says he is the illegitimate son of Sidney Poitier. His listeners cannot directly corroborate or disprove his claim and they end up believing it both because of the wealth of details he supplies, all of which he was able to find in public documents, but also because of their own desire to believe it and to thus have this connection with fame. He becomes even more deeply enmeshed in their lives by saying that he attends Harvard with their children. He know all their children's names and information about them, and he also knows their children's friends and where they live and what they do; this is what gives him the greatest credibility. It turns out that he had acquired the address book of Trent, a friend of one of the children and had used this normally private information to weave a convincing but deceptive display of what he claimed to be his own network.

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Trent had fallen in love with Paul and was coaching him on upper class manners, and offered to provide him with information about all the people in the address book:

> Trent: 'I don't want you to leave me, Paul. I'll go through my address book and tell you about family after family. You'll never not fit in again. We'll give you a new identity. I'll make you the most eagerly sought after young man in the East....
>
> Trent: Paul stayed with me for three months. We went through the address book letter by letter. Paul vanished by the L's. He took the address book with him ...'

'Six Degrees of Separation' shows the power of social network display. Paul's knowledge of each person was minimal, but he was able to weave a convincing portrait of himself as a member of the group with a few well-chosen details about each.

Participants in social networking sites make this sort of information about their personal social world publicly available — an extensive list of their friends, with a wealth of detail about each individual. Perhaps one day if social network displays become ubiquitous, the signalling value of detailed social network information will decline. But that decline will only occur because the signal loses value through repeated deceptive use. In the meantime, users of on-line social network systems should be aware of the value of the data they are making available on-line — and of the ways that it can potentially be used.

4. Forming connections and combining contexts

The main point of social networking sites is to help people make new connections. Underlying their model is the assumption that having a mutual acquaintance, or even just being connected via a chain of acquaintances, provides context for connecting.

This is born out in our everyday experience. When people meet, they often attempt to establish mutual acquaintances: 'Oh, you were in Colorado in 1997? Did you know so-and-so?' Finding a mutual acquaintance establishes common ground — to whatever extent knowing that person defines a certain set of beliefs and interests, mutual acquaintanceship establishes that both people share some of these. Claiming to have close ties with the person makes it likely that many things are shared, disavowing close ties also provides key contextual information: 'Yes, but not well. He was part of that weird astro-therapy scene.'

4.1 Forming connections around foci of interest

People can meet randomly in all kinds of ways. But to turn an encounter into a connection, there generally must be some common ground. Feld [10] used the term focus to refer to the situations, interests, and individuals, etc, that bring people together and shape the dynamics of network formation. Connections between people, he said, are often, but not exclusively, made through these foci. He characterised foci in terms of how constraining they are. People who share a highly constraining focus, such as being in the same close-knit family, interact with each other frequently and are all tied to each other. People who share a lightly constraining focus, such as living in the same urban neighbourhood, may have only a slightly higher chance of interacting with and being tied to others with that focus. People form ties when they share a focus; the more constraining the focus and/or the greater number of foci they share, the more likely it is that they will form a tie.

A person can be a focus — people who host regular get-togethers of their various friends function this way. People on social networking sites are foci, bringing people together in a common list. Being on such a list is very lightly constraining; like sharing a neighbourhood, it brings only a minimally greater likelihood of interaction. Yet as one peruses the connection display of one's various acquaintances, it often happens that a particular person appears repeatedly — here, the connection is stronger, for multiple foci are shared, and the likelihood of making a real connection higher.

Connections are not just the natural effect of shared interests: people deliberately try to reconfigure the network in order to bring disparate acquaintances together: '[W]hen an individual is confronted with the typical situation of ties to disconnected others, he or she may try to change the situation by creating and/or finding a new focus around which to organise his or her joint activities with the others... Individuals are most likely to engage in such creative network manipulation in situations where relationships involve a high proportion of their time, effort and emotion, and where the relationships are based on compatible foci' [10]. Feld's conception of ties emphasises the cost of maintaining them, as well as the benefits that ensue from having them.

> we use time and space to keep incompatible contexts of our lives separate

For Feld, bringing one's friends together makes social life easier and more efficient; activities that used to sustain one group of friendships now sustain two. This is an important concept for social networking sites, for it posits a benefit to the person who serves as the introducer of two others. Some sites are designed to help users create foci. Tribe.net, for instance, encourages users to form topical discussion groups (i.e. tribes) and to invite people whom they would like to bring together, in the context of that topic, to join them.

4.2 Incompatible connections

Feld is careful to always add the caveat that bringing people together is desirable only if the foci are compatible. His formal definition of compatibility is that it is the extent to which two foci are involved in similar interactions and activities, a somewhat bland description that sounds as if the worst that would happen should the two groups be introduced is mutual boredom. Yet in a parenthetical statement he gives as a more vivid example of incompatibility: '... a married man will be

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unlikely to introduce his friend from the singles bar to his family or his work associates'.

In the physical world, we use time and space to keep incompatible contexts of our lives separate. We may choose not to introduce some acquaintances to each other and may carefully orchestrate our activities to prevent overlap. Of course, some chance encounters we would have preferred to avoid inevitably occur — you are running around a park playing silly games with your children, and run right into a colleague you have been trying to impress with your steely coolness; Goffman [28], who wrote extensively about the performance of identity, discussed the salvaging of such situations as the repair of face.

By making all of one's connections visible to all the others, social networking sites remove the privacy barriers that people keep between different aspects of their lives. One school-teacher in San Francisco described the discomfort she felt as her high school students became involved with Friendster. She had originally joined with some friends, many of whom had created 'crazy, fun' profiles, including suggestive testimonials, risqué photographs, and references to wild times at the Burning Man festival. Friendster allows users to set who can see their profile — immediate friends, friends of friends, their friends, or everyone (see Fig 2 for a sample MyProfile page). She had set her profile to be viewable only by friends — but then was asked by one of her students to be a 'friend'. Although she could edit her own profile to be quite sedate, her friends' profiles were not. Accepting her student's friendship request would reveal her full network to her class, while saying 'no' felt rude and distancing. When people from different contexts in one's life meet, it is possible that the different facets of one's life will be revealed to each other. This need not involve explicit gossip or even any discussion of the common friend at all; sometimes simply encountering people from different aspects of someone's life can be quite revealing. The discomfort can be felt both by the performer caught in two roles and the observer. A posting in a discussion group on Tribe.net about social network sites says:

> 'My issue with Tribe is that the boundaries between personal and professional are TOO fuzzy. I want to get to the person, rather than to the pitch. On the other hand, I really DON'T want to know that the person I'm getting ready to do business with is in an open marriage and into kinky redheads. I don't want to see half-naked pictures of them from Burning Man. It's not that I'm a prude, or offended by that stuff in general, it's just not stuff that I want to have pushed on me when I'm talking business'.

One solution for the uncomfortable mixing of too heterogeneous a set of connections is for the sites themselves to be well-defined and limited contexts, places with a clear set of situational rules. LinkedIn does this by emphasising the business focus. The profiles are limited to material that is appropriate in a business setting and every aspect of the interface encourages a relatively impersonal style of interaction. Such an approach is less likely to be successful in the social sites, however. There would need to be a vast Balkanisation in which each group with incompatible mores made its own site. This would also be counterproductive, as the creation and strengthening of heterogeneous ties, when they are not actually incompatible, is one of the key benefits of these sites. It is, however, possible to design social networking sites that allow for contextual privacy.

For example, today some sites allow users to designate that some information will be seen by everyone and some only by people within a particular degree of connection. On Orkut, one can decide whether everyone, or just immediate connections, can see information such as birthday or sexual preference. However, connection degree is a very broad classification — it does not allow you to make any distinctions among the people you are linked to.

A more promising design solution is the ability to define a set of categories and designate each person as a member of one or more of these categories. One could then set which sections of one's profile or people in one's network were for viewing by particular acquaintances. Thus, to close friends one might still show everything, but one could have a category of 'work colleagues' who would see only work related information, and not be made aware of the more outrageous connections. This faceting of profile and network would not be apparent to anyone unless two people sat down and compared what each could see of a third; that is analogous to real world situations in which two people discuss a third whom they each know in a different context. One could readjust what people saw as relationships and individuals grew and changed. A friend who starts off with a fairly innocuous self-presentation might be made visible to all friends. But if he then chooses to use his profile to make extremist political statements that one disagrees with, he could be made visible as a connection only to, say, other friends who are very politically engaged or to close friends with whom everything is shared; to the rest, the friendship would not be advertised. The ability to make one's network display nuanced and adaptable could be an important piece in making social networking sites more generally useful.

5. The expanding network

The great exhortation of the social networking sites is to 'grow your network now!' Meet new people, form new connections. The goal is ever increasing social girth. The networking sites make it much easier to form some kind of connection with other people. On many of them, a simple click on the profile of a person who intrigues you is all that it takes to launch an e-mail to them, stating that you would like to be their 'friend' or 'connection'. But what is our ability to sustain larger networks? The emphasis of the networking sites is on network growth, but the cost of maintaining large numbers of ties is not addressed. Can new communications technologies expand the number of people we can keep track of as friends? Having a meaningful conversation with 500 friends would be very temporally costly — but does sending a mass e-mail to all of them in any way substitute for that bonding experience?

Wellman [5, 6] emphasises that network structures vary considerably, both from culture to culture, and from person to person. In some societies, one's personal network is essential for obtaining the necessities of daily life, including access to health care, work, repairs, etc. In others, such as

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Fig 2 Sample Friendster profile page.

contemporary urban North America, the close personal network often focuses on domestic life, providing companionship and emotional support. Ties have many characteristics: the context in which they formed, the frequency of contact, the closeness of the relationship. Individuals also have a wide social variability across characteristics such as gregariousness, range of interests, available time, resources, etc. To understand an individual's network-based social situation is necessary to look beyond just their immediate structure. Two people who each have a network consisting of a few close ties can have structurally quite different access to information and support. One whose network is composed of ties within a single dense cluster is likely to have more support, but less access to information than one whose ties are to busy people who themselves have large, heterogeneous networks.

For this discussion, we will use a simplified typology of strong and weak ties and their effect on support and information flow. Strong ties, the kinds of ties that exist among close friends and families, the kinds of ties that connect dense clusters, are, in general, good sources for social support. Such ties can be costly to maintain, requiring much time and attention. Strong ties generally feature frequent contact,

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multiple foci, and are found in dense networks. A person who is a member only of a densely linked group will be privy to all the information that flows through that group, but is limited to the opportunities present in that cluster. Weak ties, the kinds of ties that exist among people one knows in a specific and limited context, are good sources for novel information. Such ties often bridge disparate clusters, providing one with access to new knowledge [13]. Weak ties can be less costly to maintain, and a person who has many weak yet heterogeneous ties has access to a wide range of information and opportunities (see Wellman and Potter [5], Wellman and Gulia [6], Burt [13], Granovetter [25, 29] and Lin [30] for more detailed models of social networks).

Wellman observed that a typical personal network included 3—6 very close and intimate ties, 5—15 less close but still significant and active ties, and about 1000 more distant acquaintances. People have made connections all along this continuum via social network sites. There are people who have ended up married to someone they met via such a site, thus making a very close connection. Especially for people whose local network is limited (such as someone who has recently moved to a new city), the networking sites provide a useful service, helping them find new friends and community. In many cases, the resulting personal network is similar to the sort of network they would have had had they met through more traditional means. There are also people who use the networking sites to make a very large number of new connections — connections made more quickly, for less cost and in much greater numbers than is commonly done. It is this phenomenon that we will examine here.

We hypothesise that the number of strong ties an individual can maintain may not be greatly increased by communication technology (although such technologies may decrease the importance of physical proximity [6, 29]), but that the number of weak ties one can form and maintain may be able to increase substantially, because the type of communication that can be done more cheaply and easily with new technology is well suited for these ties. If this is true, it implies that the technologies that expand one's social network will primarily result is an increase in available information and opportunities — the benefits of a large, heterogeneous network [25, 31].

Given that benefit, is there any reason not to grow one's network as large as possible? Certainly there are participants on these sites whose goal is to build huge personal networks, for a variety of reasons. For some amassers of giant networks they are an end in themselves. On Friendster, which provides personal network counts showing how many 1st, 2nd, and 3rd degree connections one has, people made a game of collecting as many connections as possible. One user said, 'What else is the site good for? It's not like you can do anything there besides look at the number of people in your network.' These energetic collectors of links were often referred to as 'Friendster whores', a pejorative term that was sometimes used self-mockingly, but also reflects the negative reaction of people who realised that an invitation to join someone's network of friends arrived not because they were perceived as an interesting or desirable person, but simply as an addition to a collection of links, one among hundreds. For other extensive network builders, the network is a means to an end. One participant on LinkedIn with over 3500 connections says in his profile: 'You just clicked through to the most active networker in London, the UK and aiming to be the most connected person in the world by 2050 when I reach 86 years of age.' His business is social networking and he claims to have found numerous associates through his LinkedIn network; testimonials describe him as acutely gregarious.

For the wholesale collectors of links, the 'Friendster whores', the benefit of creating a huge network was the game — the challenge and competition. But what about the more serious network builders? What benefits do they derive from amassing big sets of links? For some, the sites function as an awareness tool, a way to be reminded of friends and acquaintances. For others, the sites — as promised — provide opportunities to find information, dates, and jobs. These are the people who are using these sites as exploratory vehicles for navigating an extended social network.

The cost of growing a network varies from site to site. The more socially oriented sites, such as Orkut and Friendster, make adding new connections very easy: just click on a link and a message is sent with the connection request; one can optionally add a message to the request. LinkedIn makes this process a bit harder, by requiring the requestor to provide the desired connection's e-mail address, as proof that he or she knows the person (or has been able to find it through Google). Otherwise, LinkedIn will facilitate an introduction. Here, one supplies a note explaining why the connection is desired, and LinkedIn will forward it along the chain of connections reaching from requestor to target. Each of those people must read the request and forward it on with their approval or the connection is not made. Everyone is paying a cost in time and energy; furthermore, they are paying a cost in terms of social favours. Each person is requesting a favour of the person above. The initiator stands to gain a desired connection but the benefit to the intermediaries is less clear. It is important that the requestor make a compelling case for the introduction, something that will make the intermediaries feel that they are doing the recipient a favour, rather than using up some of their own good will with the recipient for the benefit of an unknown requestor. By adding these costs into the process of making connections to unknown people, LinkedIn makes the display of connections more significant — either they are known to each other, or some higher cost has been paid for the connection. Furthermore, LinkedIn members are reminded in the connection request e-mail that they may be asked to vouch for the person who is making the request, a reminder that accepting a connection is an implicit endorsement. A large network will engender numerous connection requests; here, connectivity has a cost.

networking sites streamlines the introduction process, but at a cost

It is interesting to note that even though the cost of making connections is higher on LinkedIn than on the social sites, the large-scale network builders on LinkedIn have far more links

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than the top participants in Friendster and Orkut. Presumably, the benefit of having a large network here outweighs the cost.

Being the bridge between two otherwise disconnected people or groups is a strategically important role [13], particularly if there is valuable information or opportunites to be shared between them. The bridge, being connected to these disparate groups, has access to a broad range of information. And, the bridge may be seen as valuable for the connections he or she can make. In the traditional realm of personal interaction, being the bridge requires considerable output in time and energy to maintain a heterogeneous network, to transmit information and to make introductions. Networking sites streamlines much of this process, but does the loss of the cost paid in personal interaction devalue the structure? A truly personal request is enmeshed in a complex weave of social obligations, but a semi-automated one, freed from this entanglement, may in the end feel more like spam.

the socially promiscuous networker could be the unwitting conduit of the next generation of spam

Indeed, that has been a problem with some of the more socially oriented sites. Orkut and others make it possible to broadcast messages to one's network of friends and friends of friends. In theory, this is a wonderful idea. Everyone has had situations where they needed something — a babysitter, an apartment — and asked everyone they could for leads. The networking sites make it possible to do this with just a click and a note. Then again, by making the process so low cost, the value of asking people with whom one is at least indirectly connected is lost. We look to our network of connections for favours such as apartment leads not because they are the people most likely to know about these things, but because they are the people most likely to want to help us. We may feel obligated to help out a friend, or by request, the friend of a friend, in a way we may not feel towards an unconnected stranger. When the ties are too loose, when their cost is too low, their function as the distinction between connection and stranger is lost.

It is possible to imagine a scenario in which social networking software plays an increasingly important role in our lives. For instance, e-mail is becoming increasingly unusable as spam fills inboxes, keeping one step ahead of the filtering heuristics. Perhaps a social network based filter is the solution — e-mail from your connections would always go through, and perhaps from the next degree out. Anyone else would need to go through a chain of connections to reach your inbox (or at least, to reach it with the seal of approved non-junk). Here we see again the balance of growth versus boundaries. A larger network lets you be more easily reachable, and connections who themselves are highly connected bring more opportunities for easy contact — or for renewed junk mail. The socially promiscuous networker who happily accepts every connection request could easily be the unwitting conduit of next-generation spam. Here, one might choose to limit one's connections to people who in turn chose their connections carefully — thus making indiscriminate connections costly in terms of opportunities lost in what might be preferred connections.

Networks are the extension of our social world; they also act as its boundary. We may use the network to extend the range of people we can contact; we may use it to limit the people who can contact us. Most of the networking sites so far are designed to grow networks, not limit them. Yet costs and limits can add value. The expenditure of energy to maintain a connection is a signal of its importance and of the benefits it bestows.

6. The evolution of social networking sites

Social networking sites are booming. Many have received venture funding and there are numerous enthusiastic reports that cite them as the next great wave in technology, business and/or social life. Yet, there are also signs that social networking, at least in its present incarnation, may be more craze than lasting revolution. The early and once enthusiastic users of these sites are frequently quoted as saying that they are 'over', that once one has amassed a big collection of 'friends' there is really nothing to do on the sites, and that they have ceased using them. This is a typical fashion diffusion pattern. The innovators lead, then when the rest imitate, it is time for differentiation. This has been happening among these sites, as users moved from Friendster to Tribe.net to Orkut, but will at some point the fashion that is over be the sites themselves? Or will they play an increasingly important role in defining one's personal on-line neightbourhoods?

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Judith Donath, head of the Media Lab's Sociable Media group, explores the social side of computing, building innovative interfaces for the on-line communities, virtual identities, and computer-mediated collaborations that have emerged with the convergence of computing and communication. She received an MS and a PhD in media arts and sciences from MIT and a BA in history from Yale University. She has worked professionally as a designer and builder of educational software and experimental media.



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She studies Friendster and blogging in order to understand how people negotiate their presentation of self in mediated social contexts to an unknown audience.

Previously, she studied computer science at Brown University and sociable media at the MIT Media Lab.

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Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt	
EFS ID:	16490510
Application Number:	13946461
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	9140
Title of Invention:	RECIPROCAL INSERTION OF IDENTIFICATION ELEMENTS FOR WEB PAGES
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO
Customer Number:	55246
Filer:	Scott David Paul/Alaine Allison
Filer Authorized By:	Scott David Paul
Attorney Docket Number:	8201-0013
Receipt Date:	02-AUG-2013
Filing Date:	
Time Stamp:	16:01:09
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

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APPLICATION NUMBER	FILING or 371(c) DATE	GRP ART UNIT	FIL FEE REC'D	ATTY.DOCKET.NO	TOT CLAIMS	IND CLAIMS
13/946,461	07/19/2013	2447	1130	8201-0013	20	2

CONFIRMATION NO. 9140

55246
Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
12230 FOREST HILL BLVD.
SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414

FILING RECEIPT

OC000000063088451

Date Mailed: 08/09/2013

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Inventor(s)

THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III, BOCA RATON, FL;

Applicant(s)

PT 259, LLC, Boca Raton, FL

Assignment For Published Patent Application

PT 259, LLC, BOCA RATON, FL

Power of Attorney: The patent practitioners associated with Customer Number 55246

Domestic Priority data as claimed by applicant

This application is a CON of 13/763,128 02/08/2013
which is a CON of 13/669,027 11/05/2012 PAT 8423399
which is a CON of 13/206,483 08/09/2011 PAT 8335713
which is a CON of 09/589,551 06/07/2000 PAT 7996259

Foreign Applications for which priority is claimed (You may be eligible to benefit from the **Patent Prosecution Highway** program at the USPTO. Please see http://www.uspto.gov for more information.) - None.
Foreign application information must be provided in an Application Data Sheet in order to constitute a claim to foreign priority. See 37 CFR 1.55 and 1.76.

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Projected Publication Date: 11/14/2013

Non-Publication Request: No

Early Publication Request: No
** **SMALL ENTITY** **
Title

RECIPROCAL INSERTION OF IDENTIFICATION ELEMENTS FOR WEB PAGES

Preliminary Class

709

Statement under 37 CFR 1.55 or 1.78 for AIA (First Inventor to File) Transition Applications: No

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PATENT APPLICATION FEE DETERMINATION RECORD

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Application or Docket Number: 13/946,461

APPLICATION AS FILED - PART I

FOR	(Column 1) NUMBER FILED	(Column 2) NUMBER EXTRA	SMALL ENTITY RATE($)	SMALL ENTITY FEE($)	OR	OTHER THAN SMALL ENTITY RATE($)	OTHER THAN SMALL ENTITY FEE($)
BASIC FEE (37 CFR 1.16(a), (b), or (c))	N/A	N/A	N/A	70		N/A	
SEARCH FEE (37 CFR 1.16(k), (i), or (m))	N/A	N/A	N/A	300		N/A	
EXAMINATION FEE (37 CFR 1.16(o), (p), or (q))	N/A	N/A	N/A	360		N/A	
TOTAL CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(i))	20 minus 20 =	*	x 40 =	0.00	OR		
INDEPENDENT CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(h))	2 minus 3 =	*	x 210 =	0.00			
APPLICATION SIZE FEE (37 CFR 1.16(s))	If the specification and drawings exceed 100 sheets of paper, the application size fee due is $310 ($155 for small entity) for each additional 50 sheets or fraction thereof. See 35 U.S.C. 41(a)(1)(G) and 37 CFR 1.16(s).			400			
MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM PRESENT (37 CFR 1.16(j))				0.00			
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APPLICATION AS AMENDED - PART II

		(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	SMALL ENTITY RATE($)	SMALL ENTITY ADDITIONAL FEE($)	OR	OTHER THAN SMALL ENTITY RATE($)	OTHER THAN SMALL ENTITY ADDITIONAL FEE($)
AMENDMENT A	Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	*	Minus	**	=	x =		OR	x =	
	Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	*	Minus	***	=	x =		OR	x =	
	Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))									
	FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))							OR		
						TOTAL ADD'L FEE		OR	TOTAL ADD'L FEE	

		(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	RATE($)	ADDITIONAL FEE($)		RATE($)	ADDITIONAL FEE($)
AMENDMENT B	Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	*	Minus	**	=	x =		OR	x =	
	Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	*	Minus	***	=	x =		OR	x =	
	Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))									
	FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))							OR		
						TOTAL ADD'L FEE		OR	TOTAL ADD'L FEE	

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APPLICATION NUMBER	FILING OR 371(C) DATE	FIRST NAMED APPLICANT	ATTY. DOCKET NO./TITLE
13/946,461	07/19/2013	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III	8201-0013

CONFIRMATION NO. 9140

55246
Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
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SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414

POA ACCEPTANCE LETTER

OC000000063057940

Date Mailed: 08/09/2013

NOTICE OF ACCEPTANCE OF POWER OF ATTORNEY

This is in response to the Power of Attorney filed 07/19/2013.

The Power of Attorney in this application is accepted. Correspondence in this application will be mailed to the above address as provided by 37 CFR 1.33.

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13946461	APP.FILE.REC	08/09/2013	8201-0013
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Electronic Petition Request	**TERMINAL DISCLAIMER TO OBVIATE A DOUBLE PATENTING REJECTION OVER A "PRIOR" PATENT**
Application Number	13946461
Filing Date	19-Jul-2013
First Named Inventor	THOMAS DISTEFANO
Attorney Docket Number	8201-0013
Title of Invention	RECIPROCAL INSERTION OF IDENTIFICATION ELEMENTS FOR WEB PAGES

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PT 259, LLC	100%

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○ Applicant is no longer claiming SMALL ENTITY status. See 37 CFR 1.27(g)(2).

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○ A joint inventor; I certify that I am authorized to sign this submission on behalf of all of the inventors

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Name	SCOTT D. PAUL

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Form PTO/SB/96 may be used for making this certification. See MPEP § 324.

Electronic Patent Application Fee Transmittal	
Application Number:	13946461
Filing Date:	19-Jul-2013
Title of Invention:	RECIPROCAL INSERTION OF IDENTIFICATION ELEMENTS FOR WEB PAGES
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO
Filer:	Scott David Paul/Alaine Allison
Attorney Docket Number:	8201-0013
Filed as Small Entity	

Utility under 35 USC 111(a) Filing Fees

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Basic Filing:				
Statutory or Terminal Disclaimer	1814	1	160	160
Pages:				
Claims:				
Miscellaneous-Filing:				
Petition:				
Patent-Appeals-and-Interference:				
Post-Allowance-and-Post-Issuance:				
Extension-of-Time:				

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Miscellaneous:				
		Total in USD ($)		**160**

Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt	
EFS ID:	16699257
Application Number:	13946461
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	9140
Title of Invention:	RECIPROCAL INSERTION OF IDENTIFICATION ELEMENTS FOR WEB PAGES
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO
Customer Number:	55246
Filer:	Scott David Paul/Alaine Allison
Filer Authorized By:	Scott David Paul
Attorney Docket Number:	8201-0013
Receipt Date:	27-AUG-2013
Filing Date:	19-JUL-2013
Time Stamp:	16:00:02
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	yes
Payment Type	Deposit Account
Payment was successfully received in RAM	$160
RAM confirmation Number	2710
Deposit Account	503611
Authorized User	
The Director of the USPTO is hereby authorized to charge indicated fees and credit any overpayment as follows: Charge any Additional Fees required under 37 C.F.R. Section 1.17 (Patent application and reexamination processing fees)	

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1	Electronic Terminal Disclaimer-Filed	eTerminal-Disclaimer.pdf	35856 5a8d86e8c57b273737665618462e0309124 60910	no	3
Warnings:					
Information:					
2	Fee Worksheet (SB06)	fee-info.pdf	30052 65733ac8c070fae8ef4d79e8262321e338c 293	no	2
Warnings:					
Information:					
		Total Files Size (in bytes):	65908		

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New Applications Under 35 U.S.C. 111
If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371
If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office
If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.

Attorney Docket No.: 8201-0013 **PATENT**

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of	:	Customer Number: 55246
Thomas DISTEFANO III	:	Confirmation Number: 9140
Application No.: 13/946,461	:	Group Art Unit: 2172
Filed: July 19, 2013	:	Examiner: B. Pesin

For: RECIPROCAL INSERTION OF IDENTIFICATION ELEMENTS FOR WEB PAGES

SECOND PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

The following Amendment and Remarks are submitted herewith.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-21 (Cancelled)

22. (Previously Presented) A method, within and by a computer hardware system that is configured to serve a first web page associated with a first user and a second web page associated with a second user, comprising:

establishing a reciprocal arrangement between the first web page and the second web page based upon both the first and second users opting to participate in the reciprocal arrangement;

including, within the second web page and based upon the reciprocal arrangement, a second functional identification element associated with the first entity; and

including, within the first web page and based upon the reciprocal arrangement, a first functional identification element associated with the second entity, wherein

the second functional identification element includes a link to the first web page, and

the first functional identification element includes a link to the second web page.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22, wherein

the first web page is stored in a database; and

the second web page is stored in the database.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22, further comprising

receiving, from a third user, a request for the first web page;

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dynamically generating, using a database, the first web page; and

serving, to the third user, the dynamically-generated first web page.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22, wherein

the first web page includes one or more web pages.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22, further comprising

including, within the first web page, a web asset provided by a third party separate from the computer hardware system.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, further comprising

causing, based upon the web asset being included within the first web page site, the third party to be compensated.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, wherein

the web asset is a functional application.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22, further comprising

providing, to the first user, at least one recommended web page, associated with the computer hardware system, into which the second functional identification element is to be included.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22, wherein

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the second functional identification element includes an image.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30, further comprising

receiving, from the first user, the image.

32. (Previously Presented) A webpage implementation server system that is configured to serve a first web page associated with a first user and a second web page associated with a second user, comprising:

a database storing information associated with the first and second web pages;

a computer hardware system configured to perform:

establishing a reciprocal arrangement between the first web page and the second web page based upon both the first and second users opting to participate in the reciprocal arrangement;

including, within the second web page and based upon the reciprocal arrangement, a second functional identification element associated with the first entity; and

including, within the first web page and based upon the reciprocal arrangement, a first functional identification element associated with the second entity, wherein

the second functional identification element includes a link to the first web page, and

the first functional identification element includes a link to the second web page.

33. (Previously Presented) The server system of claim 32, wherein

the first web page is stored in the database; and

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the second web page is stored in the database.

34. (Previously Presented) The server system of claim 32, wherein the computer hardware system is further configured to perform

receiving, from a third user, a request for the first web page;

dynamically generating, using the database, the first web page; and

serving, to the third user, the dynamically-generated first web page.

35. (Previously Presented) The server system of claim 32, wherein

the first web page includes one or more web pages.

36. (Previously Presented) The server system of claim 32, wherein the computer hardware system is further configured to perform

including, within the first web page, a web asset provided by a third party separate from the computer hardware system.

37. (Previously Presented) The server system of claim 36, wherein the computer hardware system is further configured to perform

causing, based upon the web asset being included within the first web page site, the third party to be compensated.

38. (Previously Presented) The server system of claim 36, wherein

the web asset is a functional application.

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39. (Previously Presented) The server system of claim 32, wherein the computer hardware system is further configured to perform:

providing, to the first user, at least one recommended web page, associated with the computer hardware system, into which the second functional identification element is to be included.

40. (Currently Amended) The server system ~~method~~ of claim 32, wherein

the second functional identification element includes an image.

41. (Currently Amended) The server system ~~method~~ of claim 40, wherein the computer hardware system is further configured to perform

receiving, from the first user, the image.

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REMARKS

Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 503611, and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Date: August 27, 2013

Respectfully submitted,

/Scott D. Paul/
Scott D. Paul
Registration No. 42,984
CUSTOMER NUMBER 55246

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PTO/SB/08a (01-10)
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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (**Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)**		
	Application Number	13946461
	Filing Date	2013-07-19
	First Named Inventor	DiSTEFANO III
	Art Unit	2447
	Examiner Name	PESIN, BORIS M.
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0013

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
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	First Named Inventor	DiSTEFANO III
	Art Unit	2447
	Examiner Name	PESIN, BORIS M.
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0013

	1	"Overview of Webboard," [online] O'Reilly & Associates, Inc. © 1998, retrieved from the Internet: <http://domin.dom.edu/documents/webboard/overviewwb.PDF>, 16 pg.	☐

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EXAMINER SIGNATURE

Examiner Signature		Date Considered	

*EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through a citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

[1] See Kind Codes of USPTO Patent Documents at www.USPTO.GOV or MPEP 901.04. [2] Enter office that issued the document, by the two-letter code (WIPO Standard ST.3). [3] For Japanese patent documents, the indication of the year of the reign of the Emperor must precede the serial number of the patent document. [4] Kind of document by the appropriate symbols as indicated on the document under WIPO Standard ST.16 if possible. [5] Applicant is to place a check mark here if English language translation is attached.

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
	Application Number	13946461
	Filing Date	2013-07-19
	First Named Inventor	DiSTEFANO III
	Art Unit	2447
	Examiner Name	PESIN, BORIS M.
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0013

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Please see 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 to make the appropriate selection(s):

☐ That each item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was first cited in any communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(1).

OR

☒ That no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application, and, to the knowledge of the person signing the certification after making reasonable inquiry, no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was known to any individual designated in 37 CFR 1.56(c) more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(2).

☐ See attached certification statement.

☐ The fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17 (p) has been submitted herewith.

☐ A certification statement is not submitted herewith.

SIGNATURE

A signature of the applicant or representative is required in accordance with CFR 1.33, 10.18. Please see CFR 1.4(d) for the form of the signature.

Signature	/SCOTT D. PAUL/	Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	2013-08-27
Name/Print	SCOTT D. PAUL	Registration Number	42984

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 1 hour to complete, including gathering, preparing and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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Privacy Act Statement

The Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-579) requires that you be given certain information in connection with your submission of the attached form related to a patent application or patent. Accordingly, pursuant to the requirements of the Act, please be advised that: (1) the general authority for the collection of this information is 35 U.S.C. 2(b)(2); (2) furnishing of the information solicited is voluntary; and (3) the principal purpose for which the information is used by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is to process and/or examine your submission related to a patent application or patent. If you do not furnish the requested information, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office may not be able to process and/or examine your submission, which may result in termination of proceedings or abandonment of the application or expiration of the patent.

The information provided by you in this form will be subject to the following routine uses:

1. The information on this form will be treated confidentially to the extent allowed under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) and the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a). Records from this system of records may be disclosed to the Department of Justice to determine whether the Freedom of Information Act requires disclosure of these record s.

2. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, in the course of presenting evidence to a court, magistrate, or administrative tribunal, including disclosures to opposing counsel in the course of settlement negotiations.

3. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Member of Congress submitting a request involving an individual, to whom the record pertains, when the individual has requested assistance from the Member with respect to the subject matter of the record.

4. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a contractor of the Agency having need for the information in order to perform a contract. Recipients of information shall be required to comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(m).

5. A record related to an International Application filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization, pursuant to the Patent Cooperation Treaty.

6. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to another federal agency for purposes of National Security review (35 U.S.C. 181) and for review pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act (42 U.S.C. 218(c)).

7. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the Administrator, General Services, or his/her designee, during an inspection of records conducted by GSA as part of that agency's responsibility to recommend improvements in records management practices and programs, under authority of 44 U.S.C. 2904 and 2906. Such disclosure shall be made in accordance with the GSA regulations governing inspection of records for this purpose, and any other relevant (i.e., GSA or Commerce) directive. Such disclosure shall not be used to make determinations about individuals.

8. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the public after either publication of the application pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 122(b) or issuance of a patent pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 151. Further, a record may be disclosed, subject to the limitations of 37 CFR 1.14, as a routine use, to the public if the record was filed in an application which became abandoned or in which the proceedings were terminated and which application is referenced by either a published application, an application open to public inspections or an issued patent.

9. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency, if the USPTO becomes aware of a violation or potential violation of law or regulation.

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OVERVIEW OF WEBBOARD

WebBoard is copyright ©1998 O'Reilly & Associates, Inc.
This documentation is largely adapted from the WebBoard help screens within the program.

WebBoard Basics

WebBoard is a tool for online conferencing. Sometimes referred to as forums or discussion groups, online conferencing allows you to share information with others quickly and easily.

You can share information by posting messages directly to WebBoard conferences (and reading responses). When you need to make a file available to your conference-mates, simply attach the file to a message. If you or others in your group travel, WebBoard lets you participate by email, both reading and responding to posted messages. And, if you need or want to discuss something in real time, WebBoard's chat (if enabled) provides instant interaction.

Since WebBoard is a Web-based application, you work with it through a browser-an interface with which you are already familiar. For email participation, your favorite email client is your interface.

This documentation walks you through all the steps you need to get started with WebBoard. First it provides an overview of the WebBoard structure. Then it shows you how to establish an account, navigate, and find information. With these basics in hand, you will be prepared to jump right into the conversation.

What is WebBoard?

WebBoard is a collection of messages posted by various participants. In Dominican's case, the boards are usually course-related and have been established by the instructor. To keep track of those messages and foster meaningful information exchange, WebBoard messages are organized in a hierarchy with four levels:

- Board (also called virtual board)
- Conference
- Topic
- Message (new topic or response)

You can liken this hierarchy to the relationship of pages in books to the bookcase that houses the book. The bookcase is the board, which houses multiple books, or conferences, on similar or varying subjects. Each book contains chapters with numbers or titles, just as conferences contain topics, with more focused subjects.

Each chapter in a book has specific content that relates to the chapter title, just as topics have messages discussing that topic.

WebBoards at Dominican are set up by the WebBoard administrator while conferences within each WebBoard are set up by the board managers--usually the instructor of a class. The manager decides how to arrange the subject matter of conferences within a board. However, you create the topics and messages by posting and replying in conferences that interest you. You can start a new topic in a conference any time you want to change the subject. Your instructor will provide directions regarding which conference is relevant for which topic(s).

Dominican's WebBoard can have different types of boards and conferences for different purposes. Some boards may be closed to you and some conferences may let you read, but not post, messages. The WebBoard administrator and board managers configure the settings that control board and conference types. You don't need to know about the settings, but you do need to understand how your work with WebBoard may vary depending on those settings.

Getting Started

WebBoard is a web-based application. Your instructor will provide the exact address (URL) of the WebBoard for a class. You can reach it by entering the board's URL (or web address) directly in your browser. At Dominican, the address will typically look like this:

http://dom172.dom.edu/~[number of course][semester]

Therefore, the WebBoard for your English 200 class during the Spring of 2001 will have an address of:

http://dom172.dom.edu/~engl200sp01

When classes have more than one section the Board may be followed by a section number and/or semester:

http://dom172.dom.edu/~engl200sec3sp01

Browser Requirements

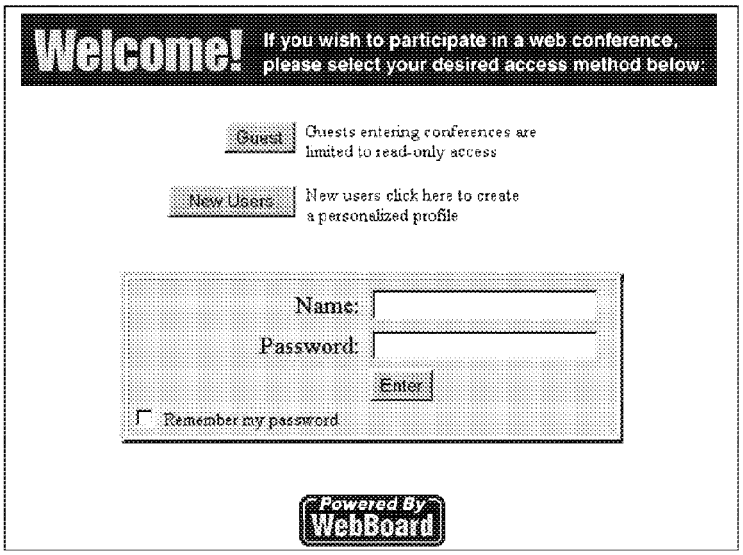
Some of WebBoard's features such as frames, file attachments, Cookie Authentication, and Chat have certain browser requirements. At minimum you should use a level 3 browser such as Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer. Note that Internet Explorer 3.0 does not support file attachments without an additional plug-in, which is available from Microsoft. In general, we recommend you use a level 4 browser such as Netscape Communicator or Internet Explorer 4.0, both of which are available from their respective vendors. If you are using a WebBoard from home, you must set your browser to *accept cookies*. Accepting

cookies is necessary for WebBoard to authenticate you. The proprietary browser that once came bundled with AOL with *not* work.

If you are using Internet Explorer, go to the **View** pull-down menu, then select **Internet Options**. Next, click the **Advanced** tab. Scroll down to the section on **Security**, where you will see options on cookies. Click ***Always accept cookies***. If you are using Netscape Communicator, go to the **Edit** pull-down menu, then select **Preferences**. Click the **Advanced** category in the window, where you will see on the right options for cookies. Click ***Accept all cookies***.

Logging in to WebBoard

After entering the WebBoard address you wish to access, you will be greeted by the following screen:



If you are accessing WebBoard on campus, you should *not* click the box labeled **Remember my password**. This will enable any following users at your terminal access to a WebBoard logged in as you! From home, however, you can have WebBoard remember your login name and password (with a cookie, a bit of information stored safely on your own computer) to make subsequent logins quicker by bypassing the login page by clicking the box. The cookie is valid for up to six months.

Logging in as an Existing User

If you already have an account, you simply enter your login name and password in the textbox on the login page. Click **Enter** to complete the login. If you are already a member of ***any*** active Dominican WebBoard, you **do not** have to log in

as a new user (see below). It is also important that you keep the ***same Name and Password*** you have already used on other WebBoards. Note that an administrator can choose to limit access to any board (called a closed board) and unless you are an authorized user, you will be denied access to the board.

Logging in as a New User

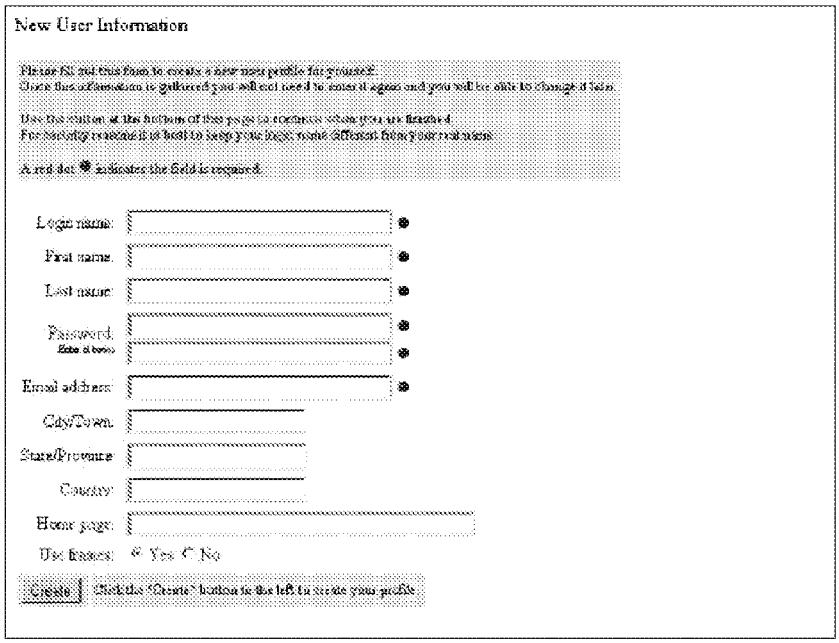
If you want to participate in a board either by posting messages or chatting, you must be a registered user and have your own WebBoard account. In some instances, the WebBoard administrator has already set up an account for you with a login name and password. If so, go to the section above on "Logging in as an Existing User." If you do not yet have an account, you can self-register and create your own account by selecting a login name and password and providing some additional information such as your real name and email address.

When selecting your login name and password, keep in mind the following:

- Your login name should be the same as your Dominican email account name (usually first four letters of the last name followed by first four letters of the first name).
- Your password **does not** have to be the same as your Dominican email account password, and should not be the same as your login name.

To log in as a new user, follow these steps:

1. On the WebBoard login page, click the **New User** button. The New User Information form appears, as shown below:



2. Follow the directions on this page and fill in the required blanks (marked with red dots). You can later change or add to this information by editing your user profile by clicking the **MORE** button on the WebBoard menubar and choosing **Edit Your Profile**.
3. At the end the form, select whether to view WebBoard in frames or non-frames mode. The default is frames, which enables you to view the Conferences list while reading and posting messages. To use frames, you must be using a level 3 or higher browser. If your browser does not support frames or you prefer to not use frames, select the No frames mode. However, it is *strongly recommended* you enable frames.
4. When you have completed entering information on the form, click **Create**. If your login name is unique, WebBoard creates the account and displays the main WebBoard page. If your login name was already being used or some other information was missing, you must complete the form again and resubmit it.

Logging in as a Guest

Some boards allow guest access. To login as a guest, click Guest. WebBoard displays the board's main page with the conference list. You may browse conferences and read messages but not post messages or participate in chat sessions. If there is no Guest button, you must create a new account to work with this board.

Working with WebBoard

Before you start posting messages and participating in chat sessions, you'll want to take a few minutes to become familiar with WebBoard's layout and basic operation, including navigation and functionality. Once you've successfully logged in, either as an existing user, new user, or guest, you will see the board's main page, where most WebBoard activity occurs.

If you selected frames mode (recommended), you will see a page similar to that shown in Figure 1 below. Typically, a board's main page has three main activity areas, which are listed below and described in the next sections:

- The conference list (left frame) displays the conferences, topics, and messages. This list can toggle between displaying the conference list and the list of new messages.

- The menubar (top frame) has buttons for using WebBoard's commands and features.

- The message window (right frame) is the working area where information and forms are displayed. For example, the message window is where you read and post messages, complete user profile information, and execute searches.

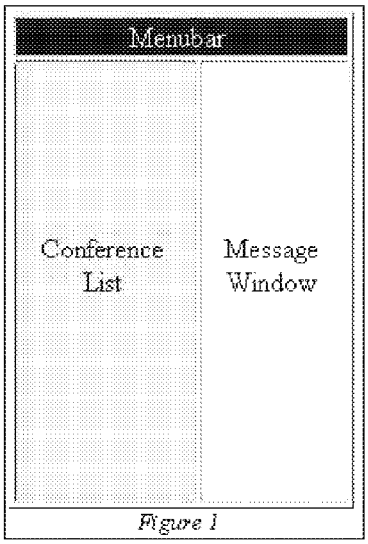


Figure 1

In non-frames mode, you will see the menubar and either the conference list or message window, but not both at the same time. You can switch between modes by editing your WebBoard user profile.

Using the Menubar

You can accomplish many WebBoard tasks quickly by using WebBoard's menubar, located at the top of your browser window. This section describes each of the functions you can perform from the menubar. The menubar is at the top of your WebBoard screen and looks like this:



Post
opens a form in the message window to compose and post a new topic to a conference (note, you must select a conference first).

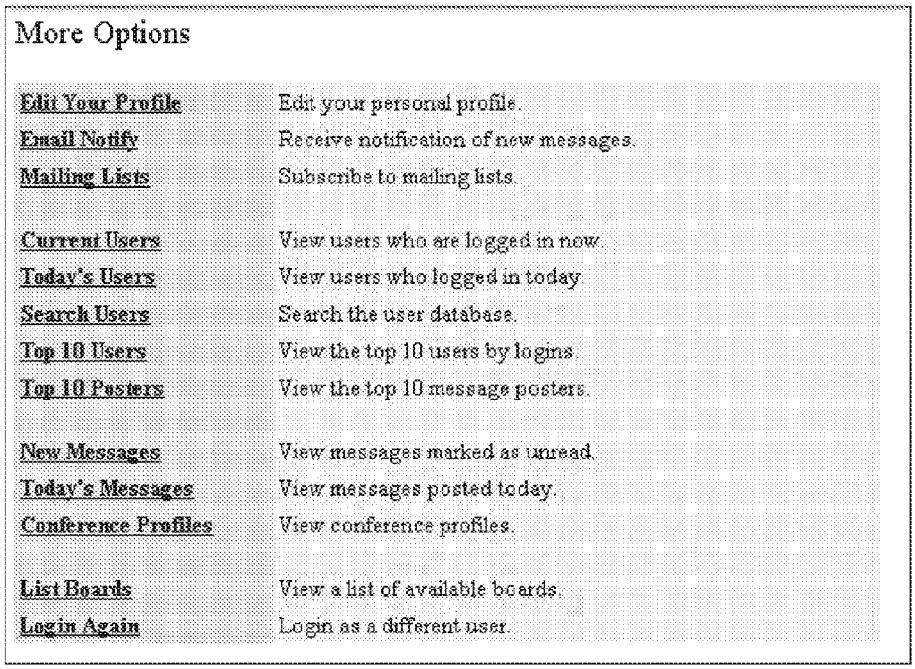
Refresh
updates the Conferences list. In general, WebBoard refreshes the list when new messages are posted, but you may want to manually refresh the list on occasion.

Chat
displays the Available Chat Rooms list, which gives links to each chat room and tells how many active users are in each. If chat is not available for this board (the WebBoard administrator's and your instructor's prerogative), this button does not appear.

Search
opens the Message Search form for finding specific content in topics and/or messages (see "Searching Messages" later in this document).

Mark All Read
displays a list of all conferences and allows you to mark messages as read in one or all of them. Marking messages as read eliminates the NEW icon next to the message and changes the title of the message from italic to regular font. WebBoard does not automatically mark messages read; you must do it manually.

More
opens the More Options menu, pictured below:



From here, you can select the features and functions listed below.

•	**Edit Your Profile** displays your user profile information and allows you update it, including changing your password.
•	**Email Notify** displays a list of conferences from which you can select which conferences should let you know by email that a new message has been posted.

•	**Mailing Lists** displays a list of conferences from which you can select which conferences you want to receive all postings via email. By default, conferences are *not* set up with email capability, unless your instructor decides to change this.
•	**Current Users** lists the users who are currently logged on (updates every 60 seconds).
•	**Today's Users** lists the names of people who have logged in today.
•	**Search Users** displays a form for finding active WebBoard users by first or last name. From the search results you can look at any user's profile information.
•	**Top 10 Users** lists the top 10 users by the number of logins.
•	**Top 10 Posters** lists the top 10 message posters.
•	**New Messages** lists all messages that are marked New. The new messages are listed in the Conferences list frame.
•	**Today's Messages** lists conferences that have messages posted today.
•	**Conference Profiles** lists each conference with a brief description of its purpose.
•	**List Boards** lists each virtual board on this site that you have visited. Each board name is a link to that board, which lets you move easily among boards.
•	**Login as a Different User** lets you to log in as a different user to the current board. This is particularly important if you are at a terminal in the Lab where the previous user forgot to logoff of his/her WebBoard!
•	**Help** displays Help for WebBoard features. This documentation is based largely on WebBoard's very useful help files.
•	**Logoff** ends your WebBoard session and displays another page. Logging off provides a bit more security for WebBoard users. Note that after logging off in the Labs, you should also **close** your Web browser!

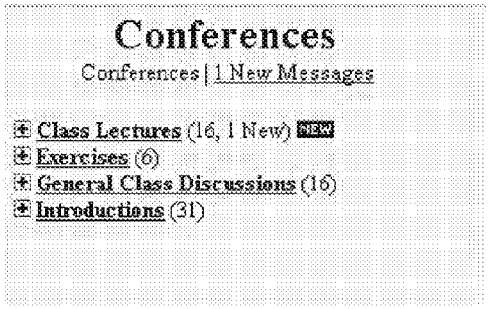
If you have been designated as a WebBoard manager or moderator by the WebBoard administrator, you will see more items on this menu. Please consult our documentation on managing WebBoards.

Browsing Conferences, Topics, and Messages

Conferences are the idea starters for the board. Topics and messages provide the content for conferences. A conference is created by a WebBoard administrator or

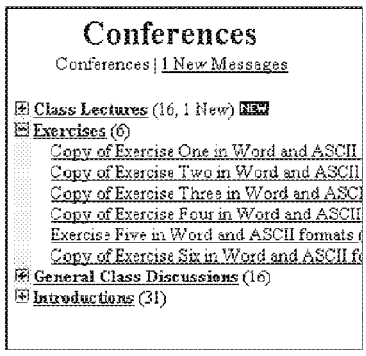
manager but the real discussion begins when someone posts a topic to it. Other users can reply to the topic by posting reply messages at any time. All messages in a topic may have the same name as the original topic or a different name; however, reply messages are indented under the topic message-a visual clue to show the relationships.

WebBoard's ability to let you browse by conference or topic from the Conferences list means you can either follow a subject exhaustively or pick and choose just the messages you want. The Conferences list shows all the conferences on this board. An expansion box (+ icon) to the left of a conference name indicates that the conference has topics and messages. The numbers in parentheses to the right of the conference name tells how many total and how many new messages are in it. Conferences with new messages have a **NEW** icon to the right of the conference name. Here is a typical listing of Conference names from a WebBoard used for a graduate school class at Dominican:



To display the topics in a conference, click the conference name or the expansion box. You can expand one conference at time. When you expand another conference, the previous topic list collapses. Or, you can close the conference list by clicking the expansion box again.

An expansion box to the left of the topic name indicates that this topic contains more than one message. Topics and messages both have hyperlinks that you can click to open them in the right frame. To the right of each topic and message is the poster's name and date. The poster's name is also a hyperlink to that person's profile.



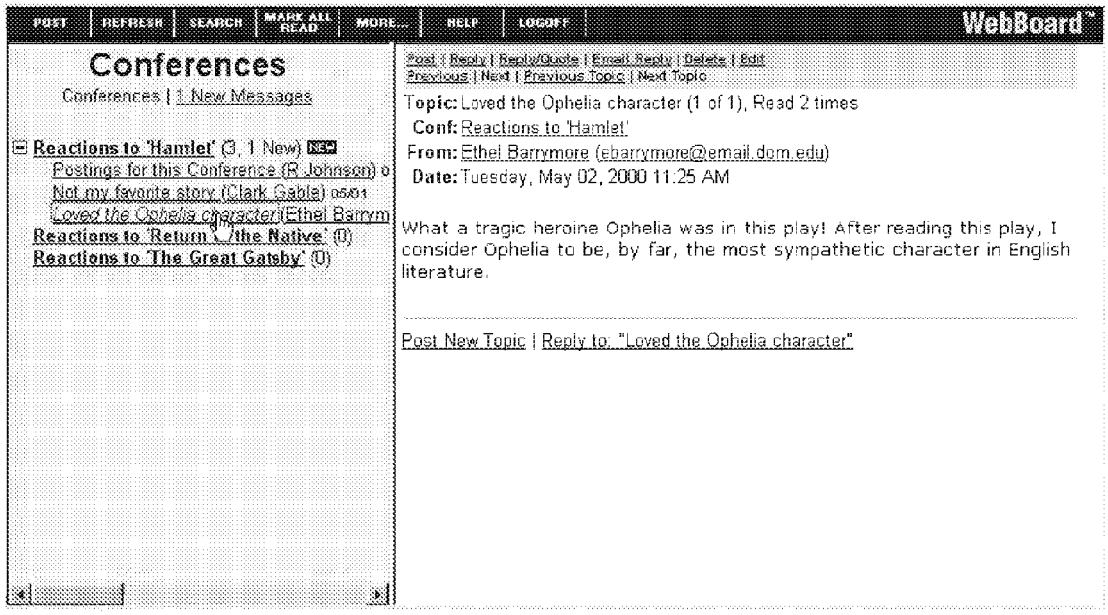
Reading Messages

WebBoard's messages are arranged logically with the earliest (original topic) message at the top of each topic list. You can follow a thread from its beginning if you desire, or jump in at a later point. When you click a message on the Conferences list, the message appears in the right frame (unless you are using non-frames mode). By default, all subsequent messages in the topic are displayed so you can read them in order. This viewing mode is called the Full topic view, which you can change to a one-message-at-a-time mode by editing your user profile. Note that you cannot see messages earlier in the list; however, you can click the Previous hyperlink in the Message menu.

Follow these steps to read specific messages:

1. From the Conferences list, select the conference you want to view and click its name or the expansion box (**+** icon).
2. Locate the topic you want to read and click its name or the topic expansion box. If you click on the name, the message and replies are displayed in the message window. If you click the topic expansion box, the subsequent messages are displayed.
3. If you expanded the topic list in step 2 but did not display the message, locate the message you want to read and click its name. The message displays in the Message window. You may need to scroll to read the entire message(s).
4. When you have finished reading the message, you can select another message to read or you can post a new topic or reply.

Here is an example of what a message window looks like when opened. In this case, the user clicked on the hyperlink in the **Reactions to Hamlet** conference to display the message content for ***Loved the Ophelia Character***:



Displaying New Messages

WebBoard gives you several ways to see and read new messages quickly. Conferences that have new messages are marked with a **NEW** icon to the right of the conference name. The numbers in parentheses following a conference name tell you how many total messages there are in the conference as well as how many new messages. When you expand a conference, you can quickly identify new topics and messages by their italic titles.

However, looking for **NEW** icons and italic titles can be a bit tedious, especially in a large conference. Instead, WebBoard has three ways you can get to new messages instantly:

•	**New Messages Link: Welcome Page** Each time you log in to WebBoard, the Welcome page in the right frame includes a link indicating how many new messages you have. Click on the link and a list of conferences with new messages appears in the Conferences list frame (to the left). Expanding any conference listed displays only the new messages in that conference.
•	**New Messages Link: Conferences List** At the top of the Conferences list are two links: Conferences and New Messages. Clicking on these two links toggles between the full conference list and a list of conferences with new messages. To see the new messages, click the New Messages link and expand any conference listed.
•	**New Messages Link: More Options Menu** The More Options menu (available from the **More** button on the menubar) includes a link labeled New Messages. Click on this link and a list of conferences with new messages appears in the Conferences list frame (to the left). Expanding any conference listed displays only the new messages in that conference.

The first time you log in to WebBoard, you will have no new messages. You will still want to read through several messages, but only once you are a registered WebBoard user, do messages appear as new.

If you are still confused about posting, you may want to check our Web-based version of this document, which links to a viewlet that guides you step-by-step through how to post a message. The Web-based version of this document is at:
http://domin.dom.edu/documents/webboard/webboard.htm

Updating Message Status

WebBoard considers all messages to be new until you update their status. That means even if you have read a message, WebBoard thinks it is new until you manually mark it as read. Although probably more desirable from a user perspective, automatically updating message status adds huge computing overhead and has not been practical for a Web-based application like WebBoard. Automatic updates are on the list to implement when feasible.

To manually update message status from new to read, select **Mark All Read** from the menubar. A page opens listing the conference names. Select the conferences that you want to have marked read. WebBoard instantly updates the information and refreshes the Conferences list. +To update all conferences at once (for example, if you've been away from WebBoard for a period of time or have been reading messages by email), select Mark All Conferences Read.

Searching for Messages

Sometimes you may need to find messages with specific content or titles from one or more conferences. WebBoard lets you search for content in topic titles or in both titles and message bodies. You can also request varying counts of search results and whether search results are shown in a detailed or short (standard) format. When WebBoard finds messages that match your search criteria, it lists them by date order, grouped by conference. Each entry in the list is a hyperlink, so you can click on any message and view it.

Your search request can be for a single word, part of a word, or a group of words. So, if you search for the word "boil" in topics only and standard format results, you enter the word boil and WebBoard returns the match of How to Boil Water from the Cooking conference. If you search for "spring flowers" in topics and messages detailed format results, WebBoard find matches including "lovely pink spring flowers," "buying small spring flowers," "daffodils are spring flowers," and so forth.

To search for words within topics and/or message bodies, follow these steps:

1. From the WebBoard menubar, select **Search**. The Message Search form opens.

2. Enter the word(s) you want to search for in the textbox field, for example, coffee. For a phrase, you may want to enclose the words in quotation marks.

3. Select how many matches should be displayed (Display count). For example, if you know that the word coffee is used often, specify 120. Of course, the higher the display count, the longer the search takes.

4. Select how the matches should be displayed (Display detail). Standard results shows the topic/message title for the matched word. Detailed results shows the matched word in partial-sentence context of the match. If the word you want to

find is frequently used, specify Detailed results to see the context. For example, to find "Bring coffee to the meeting," specify Detailed results so that you can see the context of the word coffee.

5. Select whether matches should be found in topics only or in topics and message bodies. Topics refers to the title of a topic or message, not just topic messages.

6. Select the conference(s) containing the search word. To select more than one conference, hold down the Control key as you select additional conference name(s) with the mouse. (The Shift key also works to select contiguous conferences.)

7. Click **Search**. The Message Search Results form appears displaying the conference name, the subject, and the date. If you have selected Detailed results, the details of each result appears below the conference name. Click Search Messages to return to the Message Search form.

Editing Your User Profile

Each user has a profile, which contains information WebBoard uses in various ways. The most important way is that it stores your login name and password which WebBoard uses to give you access to a board. It also contains personal information about you that other WebBoard users can view, such as your address, professional information, hobbies, and other interests.

Your user profile is also a place for selecting how you will work with WebBoard, such as using frames or non-frames mode. When you first log in as a new user, WebBoard asks you to fill out a New User Information form. This information is part of what makes up your user profile. This section tells you how to change that information and what else makes up your user profile.

You can edit your user profile at any time. In fact, you should review your user profile shortly after logging in the first time, to ensure that all the information is complete and correct. To edit your user profile, follow these steps:

1. Select **More** from the WebBoard menubar. The More Options menu appears.

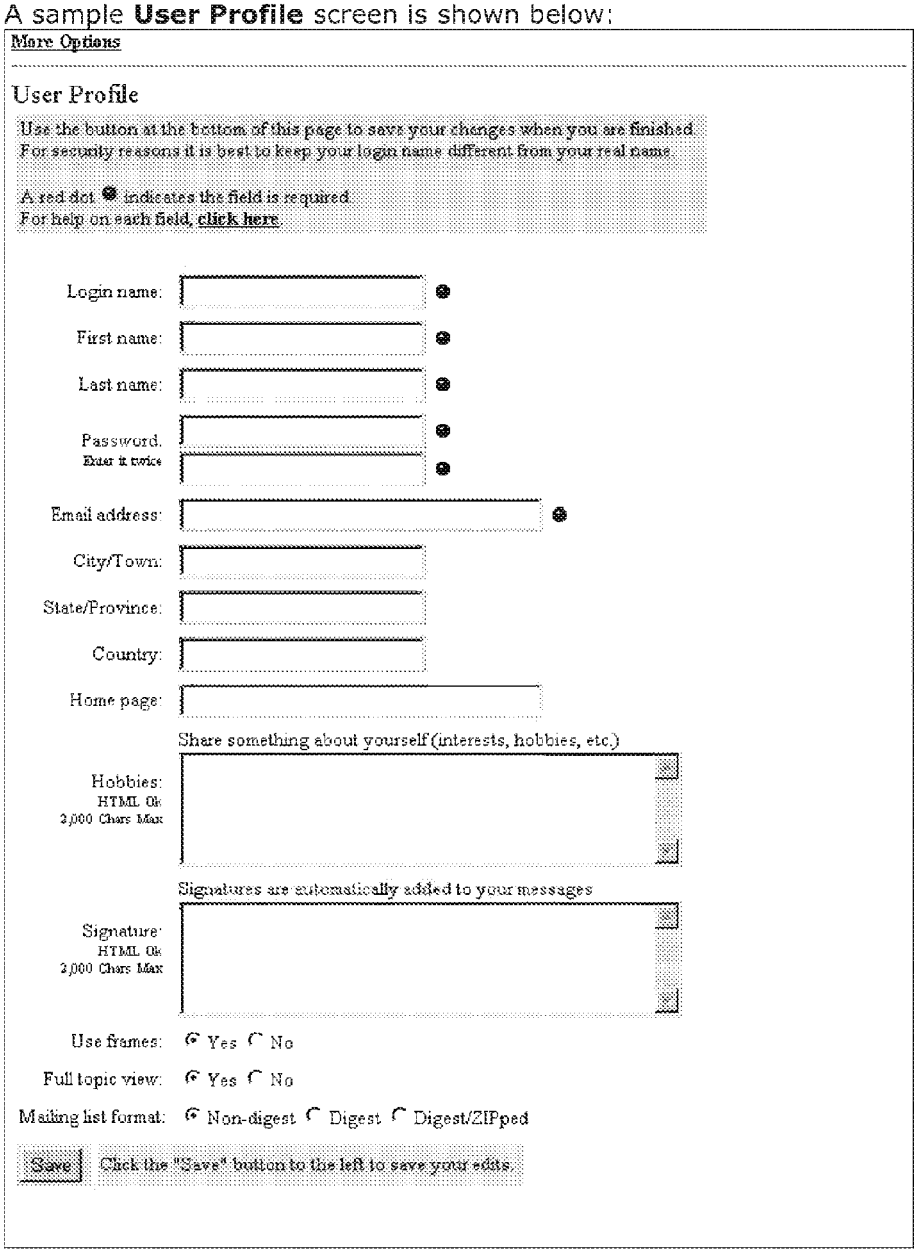
2. Click **Edit Your Profile** from the More Options menu. The User Profile page appears, as shown below.

3. Make any changes necessary (see the rest of this section for descriptions of items on the profile). Note that you cannot leave a required field blank.

4. Click Save to update your profile. WebBoard responds with an **Edits Saved** message.

5. Continue with your WebBoard session.

A sample **User Profile** screen is shown below:



The information you can change in your user profile includes:

Login Name (required)
This name is your unique key for entering WebBoard. You were either assigned this name or created it when you registered on WebBoard the first time you logged in as

a new user. In general, this name is not displayed to other users unless the WebBoard administrator has chosen to use login names instead of real names. At Dominican, the login name should be the same as your email user name.

Password (required)
This entry is masked (shown as *s) for security. You can change your password to protect your postings and user information. If you do, you must enter it twice on the form to ensure you typed it correctly. The password is never shown to other users. Your password for WebBoard ***does not*** (and probably *should not*) be the same as your email password.

Email Address (required)
This address is used for WebBoard's email notification and mailing list features. It is also included with each message you post to make it easy for other board members to respond to you directly.

Signature
This field holds information that is attached to every message you post. Similar to an email signature, you may want to include your name, contact information, a quotation or vision statement, and so forth. Your signature can be up to 2,000 characters and contain HTML. Remember, however, that other users probably appreciate short signatures that don't take long to download over the Web.

The **Home Page** information can be filled in if you have a home page on the Internet. **Hobbies** is not necessary, since other users can't view it anyway!

Use Frames
This option allows you to switch between viewing WebBoard in frames mode or non-frames mode. The default is **Yes, use frames**, which means WebBoard displays both the Conferences list and the message window at the same time. *This is highly recommended*. If your browser does not support frames or you find frames too slow for your connection, choose No for this option.

Full Topic View
This option allows you switch between viewing messages in full topic mode or single message mode. The default is **Yes, full topic mode**, which means that all subsequent messages posted to a topic are displayed in the message window. In single message mode, only one message is shown at a time and you must click a link to show the next message in the topic. We recommend using full topic view.

Mailing List Format
This option allows you to choose which format WebBoard uses to send you mailing lists. Mailing lists allow you to keep track of WebBoard discussions at an email address of your choice. It does, however, somewhat defeat the purpose of WebBoard, since Conference threads of discussion are more difficult to follow in the mailing list format. The three mailing list formats are non-digest, messages sent

individually when they are posted; digest, messages sent once a day in a single email that is indexed by message; digest/zipped, messages put into digest format and then zipped up to compress the size of the email. Depending on the traffic and your need to respond to the conferences you participate in by email, you can select the best delivery method. For example, if you want to respond to many messages that are posted, you should select the non-digest form. If you simply need a record of messages posted on a board, select the digest/zipped format. Selecting a mailing list format does not subscribe you to any WebBoard mailing lists; you complete that task from the **More Options** menu, then selecting **Mailing Lists.** Mailing lists are described in more detail here. We recommend you read the appropriate help screens on mailing lists before changing the mailing list format.

Logging Off

When you are finished with your WebBoard session, you can simply point your browser at another site on the Web (if you're at home) or you can officially log off WebBoard. The **Logoff** button in the menubar takes you to another page designated by the WebBoard administrator (such as your instructor's syllabus or the Dominican home page). Note that if you click the Back button in your browser, you will be returned to WebBoard without having to log in again. This is why it is important that you should ***close your browser*** or clear your browser's cache if in the Lab. You should also not have WebBoard remember your password!

Ready to Start?

This documentation has probably provided you with sufficient information to begin using WebBoard. If you would like more detailed documentation on using Conferences (posting messages, replies, attachments, etc.), consult our separate documentation ***Participating in WebBoard Conferences***.

If you have questions about WebBoard, contact Dominican's WebBoard Administrator, Ken Black, at ext. 6512 (Off campus: 708-524-6512), or via email at ***kblack@email.dom.edu*** *.*

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This documentation is largely adapted from the WebBoard help screens within the program.

Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt	
EFS ID:	16699410
Application Number:	13946461
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	9140
Title of Invention:	RECIPROCAL INSERTION OF IDENTIFICATION ELEMENTS FOR WEB PAGES
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO
Customer Number:	55246
Filer:	Scott David Paul/Alaine Allison
Filer Authorized By:	Scott David Paul
Attorney Docket Number:	8201-0013
Receipt Date:	27-AUG-2013
Filing Date:	19-JUL-2013
Time Stamp:	16:03:46
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

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Submitted with Payment	no

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1		8201-0013_2dPreliminaryAmendment_08-27-13.pdf	70319 dbdd874b330a9964dad9aaad55945e53ef62c823d	yes	7

	Multipart Description/PDF files in .zip description				
	Document Description	**Start**	**End**		
	Preliminary Amendment	1	1		
	Claims	2	6		
	Applicant Arguments/Remarks Made in an Amendment	7	7		
Warnings:					
Information:					
2	Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) Form (SB08)	8201-0013_SupplementalIDS_08-27-13.pdf	612388 1fd8358 7af58aa066f941116835382eba329bf87	no	4
Warnings:					
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A U.S. Patent Number Citation or a U.S. Publication Number Citation is required in the Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) form for autoloading of data into USPTO systems. You may remove the form to add the required data in order to correct the Informational Message if you are citing U.S. References. If you chose not to include U.S. References, the image of the form will be processed and be made available within the Image File Wrapper (IFW) system. However, no data will be extracted from this form. Any additional data such as Foreign Patent Documents or Non Patent Literature will be manually reviewed and keyed into USPTO systems.					
3	Non Patent Literature	WebBoard_PA_08-27-13.pdf	226199 3ea8d9981844d47101c84d51fd574f31e9d6a68c5	no	16
Warnings:					
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If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371
If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

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PATENT APPLICATION FEE DETERMINATION RECORD Substitute for Form PTO-875	Application or Docket Number 13/946,461	Filing Date 07/19/2013	☐ To be Mailed

ENTITY: ☐ LARGE ☒ SMALL ☐ MICRO

APPLICATION AS FILED – PART I

FOR	(Column 1) NUMBER FILED	(Column 2) NUMBER EXTRA	RATE ($)	FEE ($)
☐ BASIC FEE (37 CFR 1.16(a), (b), or (c))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
☐ SEARCH FEE (37 CFR 1.16(k), (i), or (m))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
☐ EXAMINATION FEE (37 CFR 1.16(o), (p), or (q))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
TOTAL CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(i))	minus 20 = *		X $ =	
INDEPENDENT CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(h))	minus 3 = *		X $ =	
☐ APPLICATION SIZE FEE (37 CFR 1.16(s))	If the specification and drawings exceed 100 sheets of paper, the application size fee due is $310 ($155 for small entity) for each additional 50 sheets or fraction thereof. See 35 U.S.C. 41(a)(1)(G) and 37 CFR 1.16(s).			
☐ MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM PRESENT (37 CFR 1.16(j))				
* If the difference in column 1 is less than zero, enter "0" in column 2.			TOTAL	

APPLICATION AS AMENDED – PART II

AMENDMENT	08/27/2013	(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
	Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	* 20	Minus	** 20	= 0	X $40 =	0
	Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	* 2	Minus	***3	= 0	X $210 =	0
	☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
	☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
						TOTAL ADD'L FEE	0

AMENDMENT		(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
	Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	*	Minus	**	=	X $ =	
	Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	*	Minus	***	=	X $ =	
	☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
	☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
						TOTAL ADD'L FEE	

* If the entry in column 1 is less than the entry in column 2, write "0" in column 3.
** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 20, enter "20".
*** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 3, enter "3".
The "Highest Number Previously Paid For" (Total or Independent) is the highest number found in the appropriate box in column 1.

LIE
/DENISE LILES/

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.16. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 12 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**
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PATENT APPLICATION FEE DETERMINATION RECORD Substitute for Form PTO-875	Application or Docket Number 13/946,461	Filing Date 07/19/2013	☐ To be Mailed

ENTITY: ☐ LARGE ☒ SMALL ☐ MICRO

APPLICATION AS FILED – PART I

FOR	(Column 1) NUMBER FILED	(Column 2) NUMBER EXTRA	RATE ($)	FEE ($)
☐ BASIC FEE (37 CFR 1.16(a), (b), or (c))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
☐ SEARCH FEE (37 CFR 1.16(k), (i), or (m))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
☐ EXAMINATION FEE (37 CFR 1.16(o), (p), or (q))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
TOTAL CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(i))	minus 20 = *		X $ =	
INDEPENDENT CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(h))	minus 3 = *		X $ =	
☐ APPLICATION SIZE FEE (37 CFR 1.16(s))	If the specification and drawings exceed 100 sheets of paper, the application size fee due is $310 ($155 for small entity) for each additional 50 sheets or fraction thereof. See 35 U.S.C. 41(a)(1)(G) and 37 CFR 1.16(s).			
☐ MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM PRESENT (37 CFR 1.16(j))				
* If the difference in column 1 is less than zero, enter "0" in column 2.			TOTAL	

APPLICATION AS AMENDED – PART II

AMENDMENT	07/19/2013	(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
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	Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	* 2	Minus	***3	= 0	X $210 =	0
	☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
	☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
						TOTAL ADD'L FEE	0

AMENDMENT		(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
	Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	*	Minus	**	=	X $ =	
	Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	*	Minus	***	=	X $ =	
	☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
	☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
						TOTAL ADD'L FEE	

* If the entry in column 1 is less than the entry in column 2, write "0" in column 3.
** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 20, enter "20".
*** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 3, enter "3".
The "Highest Number Previously Paid For" (Total or Independent) is the highest number found in the appropriate box in column 1.

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APPLICATION NUMBER	FILING OR 371(C) DATE	FIRST NAMED APPLICANT	ATTY. DOCKET NO./TITLE
13/946,461	07/19/2013	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III	8201-0013

CONFIRMATION NO. 9140

55246
Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
12230 FOREST HILL BLVD.
SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414

PUBLICATION NOTICE

OC000000064986163

Title:RECIPROCAL INSERTION OF IDENTIFICATION ELEMENTS FOR WEB PAGES

Publication No.US-2013-0305132-A1
Publication Date:11/14/2013

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Doc code: IDS
Doc description: Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) Filed

PTO/SB/08a (01-10)
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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (**Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)**		
	Application Number	13946461
	Filing Date	2013-07-19
	First Named Inventor	DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	2172
	Examiner Name	PESIN, BORIS M.
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0013

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	Filing Date	2013-07-19
	First Named Inventor	DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	2172
	Examiner Name	PESIN, BORIS M.
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0013

	1	KUMAR, N.S. et al., "Social Networking Site for Self Portfolio," [online] In UREAT Int'l. J. of Research in Engineering & Advanced Technology, Vol. 1, No. 1, March 2013, retrieved from the Internet: <http://www.ijreat.org/Papers%202013/Volume1/IJREATV1I1055.pdf>, 4 pg.	☐
	2	"LiveJournal.com", [online] LiveJournal, Inc. © 1999, retrieved Jan. 27, 2014, retrieved from the Internet: <http://web.archive.org/web/20000604011251/http://www.livejournal.com/>, 15 pg.	☐
	3	"AsianAvenue.com", [online] Community Connect Inc. © 1997-2000, retrieved Jan. 27, 2014, retrieved from the internet: <https://web.archive.org/web/20000510055338/http://www.asianavenue.com/>, 11 pg.	☐
	4	"BlackPlanet.com," [online] BlackPlanet.com © 2000, retrieved Jan. 27, 2014, retrieved from the Internet: <https://web.archive.org/web/20000606010618/http://www.blackplanet.com/>, 10 pg.	☐

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	Art Unit	2172
	Examiner Name	PESIN, BORIS M.
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0013

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Please see 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 to make the appropriate selection(s):

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Name/Print	SCOTT D. PAUL	Registration Number	42984

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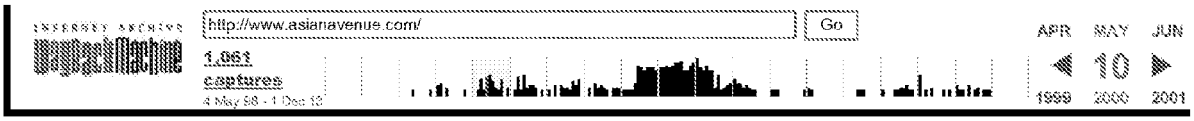
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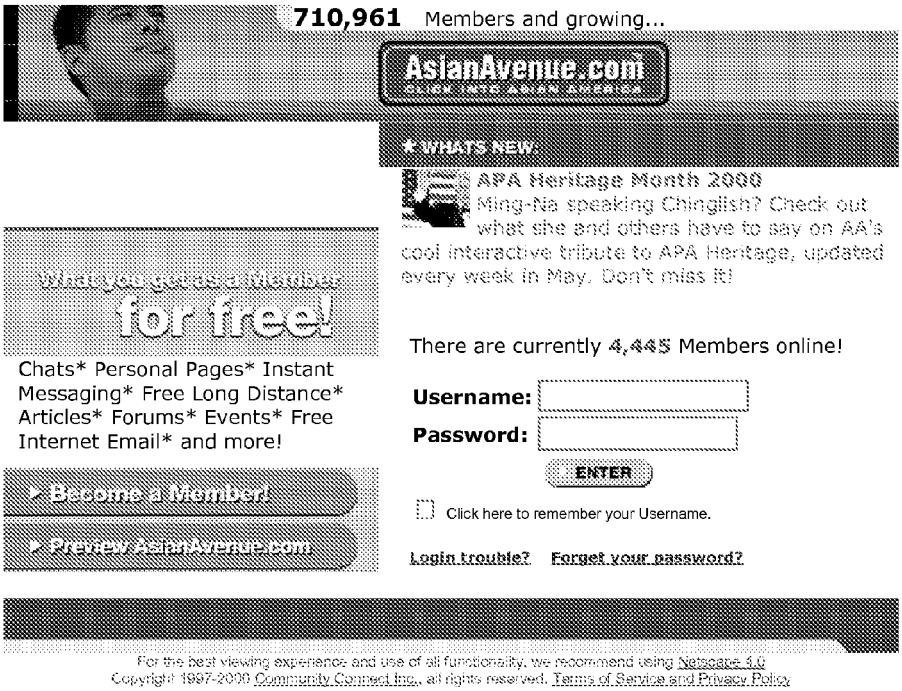
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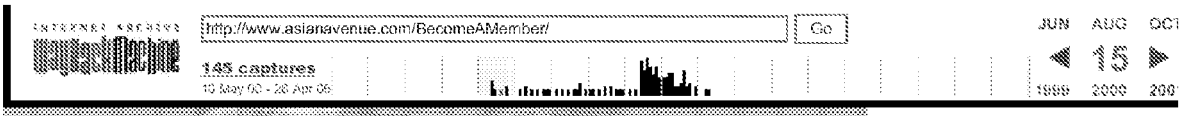
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Ethnicity
- Burmese
- Cambodian
- Chinese
- Filipino
- Hmong
- Indian
- Indonesian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Laotian
- Malay
- Pacific Islander
- Pakistani
- Singaporean
- Taiwanese
- Thai
- Vietnamese
- Other

Lifestyle
- Kid
- Teen
- College
- Graduate Student
- Young Professional
- Parent
- Senior
- Gay/Bisexual

Music Tastes
- Alternative
- Asian Pop
- Classical
- Country Western
- Dance
- Hip Hop/Rap
- Jazz/Blues
- Reggae
- Rock & Roll

Arts
- Architecture
- Fashion
- Film/Movies
- Fine Arts
- Literature
- Performing Arts
- Photography

News
- Business
- Culture
- Current Events
- Entertainment
- Health
- Investing
- Politics
- Technology

Sports
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Football
- Golf
- Hockey
- Martial Arts
- Soccer
- Tennis
- Volleyball

Recreation/Hobbies
- Cars/Motorcycles
- Computers
- Eating Out
- Musical Instruments
- Shopping
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- Video Games
- Web Surfing
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convenience only.

Privacy

Community Connect Inc. ("AsianAvenue.com") believes that communities can only truly be built through interaction and participation among community Members based on trust, privacy and freedom of expression.

AsianAvenue.com wants all Members to have the freedom to express themselves, however at the same time, AsianAvenue.com wants all Members to feel secure.

The following Privacy Policy demonstrates our intent and commitment to protect Members' rights online.

A. Profile information will be used to create personalized content, service, and advertise on the Service. AsianAvenue.com may also use your profile to generate aggregate reports and market research.

B. All profile data stored by the Service has been entered solely by the respective member.

C. Members can modify registration data associated with their account, and can control selected private information from being disclosed on their member page.

D. Communication transcripts of online chats are not retained except for scheduled chat sessions.

E. E-mail communications are only accessible by the designated recipients, except that AsianAvenue.com personnel involved in maintenance of the system may have access to the Service mail communications.

Personally identifying information, or personal information, includes your name, home or other address (like the school you attend), email address, or any other information that tells another person who you are. When you register as a Member, we ask for some personal information such as your email address.

Our policy regarding this information is simple: Except as provided in this statement, AsianAvenue.com will not disclose, sell nor rent any of the registration information you provide without giving you notice and an opportunity to refuse disclosure. We make an effort to include a link to this Privacy Policy wherever we ask you for personal information.

We also collect other information at registration such as your birthday, city where you live, hobbies, and interests. This information cannot be used to identify you. We place this information in your Member profile, which is publicly available so that other Members who share your interests can connect with you.

Some of our services, such as email and LiveTalk are offered in conjunction with partner companies. In order to provide these services, we must disclose certain information to our partners including your Username and email address. Our content partners may also ask you for some additional personal information. Our partners are all upstanding companies that will treat your personal information responsibly. But, since we don't own these companies, we can't speak for them on privacy issues.

Other companies also may sponsor promotions, contests and sweepstakes running on the Service. These companies may choose to collect personal information from you. If you don't want your information collected by these sponsors, you can decide not to participate in the promotion, contest or sweepstakes. You should be aware that our advertisers or Web sites that have links on the Service may collect

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personally identifiable information about you. This privacy statement does not address the information practices of those Web sites or advertisers.

One last thing to keep in mind: Whenever you voluntarily disclose personal information on forums, through email, or in chat areas, that information can be collected and used by others. If you post personal information in public places, others may send you unsolicited email messages. Always be smart about the information you provide online.

Finally, we may disclose Member information when we are required to by law, or when have reason to believe that someone is causing injury to or interference with our rights or property, other Service Members, or anyone else that could be harmed by such activities.

Your Member profile is password-protected so that you and only you have access to this information. In order to maintain this protection, do not give your password to anyone. Also, we recommend that, if you share your computer with other people, you sign out of your Account and close your browser window when you are done. Signing off will protect your information if you share a computer with someone else or are using a computer in a public place like a library.

We make every effort to ensure that your information is secure on our system. Unfortunately, no data transmission over the Internet can be guaranteed to be 100% secure. As a result, we cannot guarantee the security of any information you transmit to us, and you do so at your own risk.

Cookies

In our effort to provide you services customized to your interests, we use cookies to keep and sometimes track information about you. A cookie is a small piece of data that is sent to your browser from a Web server and stored on your computer's hard drive. We use cookies to: access your account information (stored on our computers) in order to deliver better and more personalized services; estimate our audience size for our advertisers; track the number of entries in our promotions, sweepstakes and contests; identify which areas of the Service you have visited. You should also be aware that companies that advertise on the Service might use their own cookies. This privacy policy does not cover how these companies use their cookies.

Age Restriction

The Service is not directed to children under the age of 13. After April 20, 2000, the Service will prohibit registration by and will not knowingly collect personally identifiable information from anyone under 13.

This restriction will be posted at points of data collection within the Service, such as registration for services.

Note to Parents: If you have any concerns about the Service or its related services, wish to find out if your child is a member of one of our services, or wish to cancel your child's membership, please contact us at memberservices@mail.communityconnect.com.

Fees and Costs

You are responsible for paying any applicable taxes and for all hardware, software, service and other costs you may incur in connection with the Service, including costs incurred in connecting to the Service via the Internet. AsianAvenue.com reserves the right, at any time, to charge fees for access to the Service, and will notify you of any such fees by posting information regarding such fees on the Service.

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NETIQUETTE

You are entirely responsible and liable for all of your activities on AsianAvenue.com. Listed below are some, but not all, violations that may result in termination of your access to AsianAvenue.com. By using AsianAvenue.com, you agree NOT to do any of the following:

1. Post, transmit, promote, or distribute content that is illegal, that encourages illegal activity, or that infringes upon the copyright, patent, trademark, trade secret, publicity right or other intellectual property or proprietary right of any third party.

2. Transmit or facilitate distribution of content that is libelous, harmful, threatening, harassing, abusive, racially or ethnically offensive, vulgar, sexually explicit, pornographic, obscene, defamatory, or objectionable in a reasonable person's view.

3. Pretend to be anyone whom you are not. You may not impersonate another member, a CCI staff member, or anyone else.

4. Attempt to get a password, other account information, or other private information from a member, or harvest email addresses or other information.

5. Post any unsolicited advertising, promotional materials, or any other forms of solicitation.

Pornography, obscenities, and defamatory postings are not allowed anywhere on AsianAvenue.com. Postings of this kind will be removed immediately, and a violation will be issued to the Member responsible for the posting (several violations will result in the termination of your account). If you see any pornographic, obscene or defamatory postings, please Alert Us immediately.

Postings which violate the intellectual property rights of third parties are not allowed anywhere on AsianAvenue.com. Postings of this kind will be removed immediately, and a violation will be issued to the Member responsible for the posting (several violations will result in the termination of your account). If you see any content which you believe infringes upon the copyright, patent, trademark, trade secret, publicity right or other intellectual property or proprietary right of any third party, please Alert Us immediately by emailing copyright@mail.asianavenue.com.

Usernames that contain obscene words, derogatory or racist remarks, or references to sexual acts or sexual anatomy are not allowed on AsianAvenue.com. Usernames of this kind will be deleted immediately upon discovery. If you see a Username that contains obscene, racist or derogatory references, please Alert Us immediately.

In the Forums area, please try to keep your postings relevant to the discussion. Postings that are irrelevant to Forum discussions, or that are designed to promote personal pages, voting polls, or third parties may be removed. If you see postings that contain foul language or that are intended to harass other Members, please Alert Us immediately.

Intentional disruption of the flow of content or discussion by repeatedly posting the same message or image or posting excessively large images is not permitted. Members who cause disruption of this kind will be issued a violation that can result in the termination of their account. If you see another Member disrupting a chat room or forum discussion, please Alert Us immediately.

Harassment of another AsianAvenue.com member via Notes, Email, Pages, or postings is not permitted. Harassment means: saying bad things about them; sending them unwanted messages; attacking their

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race, heritage, etc. Unsolicited "spam" messages are also not permitted unless expressly authorized by the recipient. While we encourage you to introduce yourself to other Members, please respect their wishes if they do not want you to send them mail. If you feel that another Member is harassing you, please Alert Us by filling out a member violation report.

Please remember that not everyone likes being put on a Friend's list. Please comply with a Member's wishes if they request to be removed from your Friend's list. As a Member, you have the right to refuse being saved to someone else's Friend's list. If another Member refuses to remove you from their Friend's list, please Alert Us and we will remove your name for you.

We can, whenever we want, edit or delete any content displayed, uploaded to, distributed, or otherwise published through the Service.

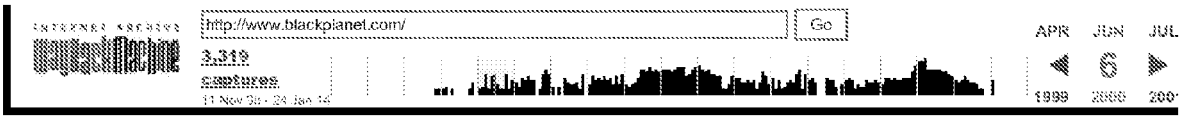
We reserve the right to remove content at any time, including any content that violates these standards. We are not responsible for any objectionable material posted by Members that you may encounter while using the Service.

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RETURN TO ASIANAVENUE.COM

For the best viewing experience and use of all functionality, we recommend using Netscape 4.0
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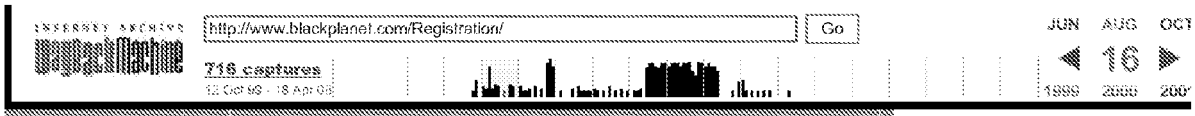
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BlackPlanet.com
membership profile

Fill out the information below to become a member and create your Personal Page on BlackPlanet.com.
We will not provide your personal information to third parties. Check out our Terms of Service and Privacy Policy for more info.

Member Account Information
Accounts created under sexually explicit or profane user names will be closed.

Username
Password (Max: 8 Characters)
Retype Password

General Account Information
First Name
Last Name
E-mail

For U.S. & Canada Residents
State/Province Select One
Zip Code

For Non-U.S. & Canada Residents
Province
Country Select One
Postal Code

Profile Information
Gender Select One
Date of Birth Month Day 19 Ex: 1975
Relationship Status Select One
Sexual Orientation Select One
Household Income Select One
Number of Children Select One

Highest Education Level Completed (This will not be displayed) Select One
College Select One
Other
Year of Graduation 19 Ex:1975

Job Industry Select One
Occupation Select One

Referral
You will get 5 Member Points every time someone you refer visits BlackPlanet.com. You can trade in Member Points for prizes, and more! Enter the e-mail addresses of friends below:

Username and Password Rules
A USERNAME is your online persona. Use your own name, or create something that expresses another side of you. Your PASSWORD is your personal key to BlackPlanet.com.

Use only letters, numbers, dashes(-), or underscores(_). Do not use blank spaces. You must use at least three characters. You cannot change your username, so choose carefully.

Age Restriction
BlackPlanet.com is not directed to children under the age of 13. BlackPlanet.com will prohibit registration by and will not knowingly collect personally identifiable information from anyone under 13.

Personal Information Display
Please check the items you WANT SHOWN on your personal page.
- [x] Age
- [x] Zodiac Sign
- [ ] Real Name
- [ ] Income
- [x] Gender
- [ ] Sexual Orientation

BlackPlanet.com Community Standards
We endorse freedom of expression on BlackPlanet.com, and make it our duty to create an experience everyone can participate in and enjoy, including parents and children. In order to serve all our members, our community standards require that BlackPlanet.com remain free of profanity, pornography and derogatory material.

We encourage members to engage in friendly, positive interaction. To learn more about the BlackPlanet.com community standards, please read our Terms of Service.

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Interests and Background

Check all that apply.

Race
- Black
- Asian
- Latino
- Native American
- White

Recreation/Hobbies
- Activism
- Cars/Motorcycles
- Computers
- Eating Out
- Musical Instruments
- Pet Owner
- Shopping
- Travel
- Video Games
- Web Surfing
- Writing

Sports
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cricket
- Football
- Golf
- Hockey
- Martial Arts
- Skiing
- Soccer
- Tennis
- Volleyball

Music Tastes
- Alternative
- Caribbean/Reggae
- Classical
- Country Western
- Dance
- Hip Hop/Rap
- Jazz/Blues
- Latin
- Pop
- R&B
- Rock
- World Music

Arts
- Architecture
- Fashion
- Film/Movies
- Fine Arts
- Literature
- Performing Arts
- Photography
- Urban Arts

News
- Beauty/Fashion
- Business
- Culture
- Current Events
- Entertainment
- Health
- Investing
- Politics
- Technology

Other Interests
(Please separate multiple interests with commas.)

Submit All Entries

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INTERNET ARCHIVE Wayback Machine
http://www.blackplanet.com/TermsofService/ Go
297 captures
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16
1999 2000 2001

BlackPlanet.com
THE WORLD IS YOURS

TERMS OF SERVICE FOR MEMBERS

Community Connect Inc. ("CCI") encourages and promotes BlackPlanet.com as an environment that fosters interaction and participation among its members. Members should thus feel free to express themselves. However, members should keep comments and contributions within the community values of the Service and must comply with applicable laws and the terms of service of BlackPlanet.com. BlackPlanet.com is a private service, provided by CCI to you ("Member"), subject to the terms of service, and other terms that may be published from time to time on BlackPlanet.com. BlackPlanet.com currently is provided as a free service to any member who agrees to abide by the terms of service. CCI reserves the right to change the nature of this relationship at any time. CCI may change, suspend or discontinue the Service or any other aspect of the Service, at any time without prior notice to members. CCI may also impose limits on certain features or services contained in the Service without prior notice.

MEMBERS WHO VIOLATE THE TERMS OF SERVICE MAY PERMANENTLY BE BANNED FROM USING BLACKPLANET.COM.COM.

By using BlackPlanet.com, you agree to the terms and conditions outlined below. If you do not agree to these terms and conditions, please do not use BlackPlanet.com. We reserve the right to change, modify, add or remove portions of these terms at any time, whenever we want. If you continue to use BlackPlanet.com after we have posted changes to the terms, it means you have accepted those terms.

[Content and Conduct]

Software files, text, sounds or otherwise transmitted, posted, linked or uploaded on or through BlackPlanet.com ("Content") by members should not be abusive, defamatory, obscene, fraudulent, in violation of applicable laws, or otherwise offensive to other Members.

You may transmit, post, link or upload software files, text, sounds or otherwise on or through BlackPlanet.com that is not subject to any patent, trademark, copyright or other proprietary rights ("Rights"), or Content in which any holder of Rights has given you express authorization for distribution on BlackPlanet.com. By submitting Content to any part of BlackPlanet.com you automatically grant, or warrant that the owner of such Content has expressly granted, BlackPlanet.com a royalty-free, perpetual, irrevocable, worldwide, non-exclusive right and license to use, reproduce, modify, adapt, publish, translate, create derivative works from, distribute, perform, transmit and display such Content (in whole or part) and/or to incorporate it in other works in any form, media, or technology now known or later developed for the full term of any Rights that may exist in such Content.

You acknowledge that by providing you with the ability to distribute your content, BlackPlanet.com is acting as a passive conduit for such

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distribution and CCI is not undertaking any obligation or liability relating to any content or activities of its members. CCI cannot prevent members from placing prohibited content on the Service. Furthermore, CCI may elect at its sole discretion to monitor some, all, or no areas of BlackPlanet.com for adherence to these terms of service or other CCI terms of service that may be published from time to time. Upon notification of inappropriate material, CCI reserves the right, but not the responsibility to remove the content. CCI further reserves the right to stop a member from accessing the Service upon receipt of complaints about the member's contributions and participation on the Service.

You and any person who have access to the Service must evaluate, and bear the risk associated with, the accuracy, completeness or usefulness of any Content. CCI does not pre-screen Content as a matter of policy, but CCI reserves the right, but not the responsibility, to remove Content which is deemed in CCI's sole discretion harmful, offensive, inaccurate or otherwise in violation of the terms of service or any rules or policies CCI has in place at the time.

You or CCI may terminate the Service at any time for any reason. Once your access to the Service is terminated, you cannot engage in the Service in any manner or for any reason without the express written consent of CCI, and you cannot assist in enabling a terminated member access to BlackPlanet.com via your Account.

[Copyright Regulations]

Everything you see or read on BlackPlanet.com is owned by us or used with permission. You may not copy, use, or retransmit anything for BlackPlanet.com without our express written permission. Furthermore, you are not allowed to post or distribute any material you do not own or which you do not have permission to use. Violation of this policy may result in copyright, trademark, or other intellectual property rights violation and subject you to civil or criminal penalties.

CCI respects the intellectual property of others, and we ask you to do the same. CCI is in compliance with the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. In order to protect the intellectual property of people from misuse we ask you to help us. If you believe that your work has been copied in a way that constitutes copyright infringement and is accessible on BlackPlanet.com, please provide CCI's Copyright Agent the following information:

1. An electronic or physical signature of the owner of the copyright or of the person authorized to act on behalf of the owner of the copyright interest.

2. A description of the copyrighted work that you claim has been infringed including the URL (i.e., Internet address) or other specific location on the BlackPlanet.com where the material that you claim is infringing is located, including enough information to allow us to locate the material and why you believe an infringement has taken place.

3. A description of the location where the original or an authorized copy of the copyrighted work exists, for example the URL (i.e., Internet address) where it is posted or the name of the book in which it has been published.

4. Your address, telephone number, and email address.

5. A statement by you that you have a good faith belief that the disputed use is not authorized by the copyright owner, its agent, or the law.

6. A statement by you made under penalty of perjury, that the information in your Notice is accurate and that you are the copyright

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owner or authorized to act on the copyright owner's behalf.

CCI's Copyright Agent for Notice of claims of copyright infringement can be reached as follows:

General Counsel and Copyright Agent
c/o BlackPlanet.com
494 Broadway, 4th floor
New York, NY 10012
By fax: 212.431.3254
By email: copyright@mail.communityconnect.com

[Limitation of Liability]

To the full extent permissible under the applicable law, CCI shall not be liable for any direct, indirect, incidental, special or consequential damages resulting from the use or inability to use BlackPlanet.com.

In no event shall CCI have any liability for any incidental, consequential, or indirect damages (including, but not limited to, damages relating to loss of business, profits, goodwill, data, programs or information, and the like) arising out of the use of or inability to use the Service or any information, advice, or services provided on or downloaded from the Service or accessed on the Internet from the Service, even advised of the possibility of such damages and regardless of the cause of action under which such damages are sought, including, without limitation, breach of contract, negligence or other tort. Because some states do not allow the exclusion of implied warranties or the limitation of liability for sequential or incidental damages, the above exclusions and limitations may not apply to you. In such states, CCI's liability is limited to the greatest extent permitted by law.

The Service contains links to third-party World Wide Web sites and other resources. CCI assumes no responsibility for the availability or content of these outside sites and resources. Therefore, any concerns a member may have regarding any other site should be directed to the relevant site administrator or webmaster.

The information, advice, facts, opinions or other content appearing on the Service posted by members or third parties are those of the respective authors and do not reflect the views of CCI. CCI assumes no responsibility or liability for these materials.

[Disclaimer of Warranties]

Everything on BlackPlanet.com is provided to you "AS IS" and "AS AVAILABLE." CCI does not make any express or implied warranties, representations or endorsements whatsoever (including, without limitation, warranties of title or non-infringement or the implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose) with respect to the Service, any products, merchandise, information or services provided through or advertised on the Service, or the accuracy or results obtained from the use of any products, merchandise, or information or services provided through or advertised on the Service. CCI does not guarantee or warrant that any files available for downloading through the Service will be free of infection by viruses or other code that may contain contaminating or destructive properties.

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PRIVACY POLICY

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B. All profile data stored by BlackPlanet.com has been entered solely by the respective member.

C. Members can modify registration data associated with their account, and can control selected private information from being disclosed on their member page.

D. Communication transcripts of online chats are not retained except for scheduled chat sessions.

E. BlackPlanet.com mail communications are only accessible by the designated recipients, except that CCI personnel involved in maintenance of the system may have access to BlackPlanet.com mail communications.

Personally identifying information, or personal information, includes your name, home or other address (like the school you attend), email address, or any other information that tells another person who you are. When you register as an BlackPlanet.com Member, we ask for some personal information such as your email address.

Our policy regarding this information is simple: Except as provided in this statement, CCI will not disclose, sell nor rent any of the registration information you provide without giving you notice and an opportunity to refuse disclosure. We make an effort to include a link to this Privacy Policy wherever we ask you for personal information.

We also collect other information at registration such as your birthday, city where you live, hobbies, and interests. This information cannot be used to identify you. We place this information in your BlackPlanet.com profile, which is publicly available so that other Members who share your interests can connect with you.

Some of our services, such as BlackPlanet.com email and LiveTalk are offered in conjunction with partner companies. In order to provide these services, we must disclose certain information to our partners including your BlackPlanet.com username and email address. Our content partners may also ask you for some additional personal information. Our partners are all upstanding companies that will treat your personal information responsibly. But, since we don't own these companies, we can't speak for them on privacy issues.

Other companies also may sponsor promotions, contests and sweepstakes running on BlackPlanet.com. These companies may choose to collect personal information from you. If you don't want your information collected by these sponsors, you can decide not to participate in the promotion, contest or sweepstakes. You should be aware that our advertisers or Web sites that have links on BlackPlanet.com may collect personally identifiable information about

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you. This privacy statement does not address the information practices of those Web sites or advertisers.

One last thing to keep in mind: Whenever you voluntarily disclose personal information on forums, through email, or in chat areas, that information can be collected and used by others. If you post personal information in public places, others may send you unsolicited email messages.

Always be smart about the information you provide online.

Finally, we may disclose Member information when we are required to by law, or when have reason to believe that someone is causing injury to or interference with our rights or property, other BlackPlanet.com Members, or anyone else that could be harmed by such activities.

Your BlackPlanet.com profile is password-protected so that you and only you have access to this information. In order to maintain this protection, do not give your password to anyone. Also, we recommend that, if you share your computer with other people, you sign out of your BlackPlanet.com Account and close your browser window when you are done. Signing off will protect your information if you share a computer with someone else or are using a computer in a public place like a library.

We make every effort to ensure that your information is secure on our system. Unfortunately, no data transmission over the Internet can be guaranteed to be 100% secure. As a result, we cannot guarantee the security of any information you transmit to us, and you do so at your own risk.

[Cookies]

In our effort to provide you services customized to your interests, we use cookies to keep and sometimes track information about you. A cookie is a small piece of data that is sent to your browser from a Web server and stored on your computer's hard drive. We use cookies to: access your account information (stored on our computers) in order to deliver better and more personalized services; estimate our audience size for our advertisers; track the number of entries in our promotions, sweepstakes and contests; identify which areas of BlackPlanet.com you have visited. You should also be aware that companies that advertise on BlackPlanet.com might use their own cookies. This privacy policy does not cover how these companies use their cookies.

[Age Restriction]

BlackPlanet.com is not directed to children under the age of 13. After April 20, 2000, BlackPlanet.com will prohibit registration by and will not knowingly collect personally identifiable information from anyone under 13.

This restriction will be posted at points of data collection within BlackPlanet.com, such as registration for services.

Note to Parents: If you have any concerns about BlackPlanet.com or its related services, wish to find out if your child is a member of one of our services, or wish to cancel your child's membership, please contact us at memberservices@mail.blackplanet.com.

BlackPlanet.com is your black community online. The BlackPlanet.com Terms of Service is our "social contract" of member interaction.

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Social Networking Site For Self Portfolio

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Abstract

Online social networking concept is a global phenomenon and there are millions of sites which help in being connected with friends and family. This project focuses on creating self-portfolios for the users which makes the users engaging with their skills. The users follow the other users to interact and communicate with them. Users can encourage the other user's blogs and videos by clicking the hit button.The functionality of this site is designed to focus on both professional as well as academics. Each user is given a dashboard for uploading videos and writing blogs.

Keywords: *Network Visualization Social network analysis Information categorization Information analysis*

1. Introduction

Since their introduction, social network sites (SNSs) such as MySpace, Facebook, Cyworld, and Bebo have attracted millions of users, many of whom have integrated these sites into their daily practices. As of this writing, there are hundreds of SNSs, with various technological affordances,supporting a wide range of interests and practices. While their key technological features are fairly consistent, the cultures that emerge around SNSs are varied. Most sites support the maintenance of pre-existing social networks, but others help strangers connect based on shared interests, political views, or activities. Some sites cater to diverse audiences, while others attract people based on common language or shared racial, sexual, religious, or nationality-based identities. Sites also

vary in the extent to which they incorporate new information and communication tools, such as mobile connectivity, blogging, and photo/video-sharing.

Scholars from disparate fields have examined SNSs in order to understand the practices, implications, culture, and meaning of the sites, as well as users' engagement with them. This special theme section of the Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication brings together aunique collectionof articles that analyze a wide spectrum of social network sites using various methodological techniques, theoretical traditions, and analytic approaches. By collecting these articles in this issue, our goal is to showcase some of the interdisciplinary scholarship around these sites[7].

The purpose of this introduction is to provide a conceptual, historical, and scholarly context for the articles in this collection. We begin by defining what constitutes a social network site and then present one perspective on the historical development of SNSs, drawing from personal interviews and public accounts of sites and their changes over time. Following this, we review recent scholarship on SNSs and attempt to contextualize and highlight key works. We conclude with a description of the articles included in this special section and suggestions for future research.

2. Portfolio

Rick Stiggins (1994) defines a portfolio as a collection of student work that demonstrates achievement or improvement. The material to be collected and the story to betold can vary greatly as a function of the assessment context.

The Northwest Evaluation Association offers a similar definition: A purposeful collection of student work that illustrates efforts, progress, and achievement in one or moreareas [over time]. The collection must include: student participation in selecting contents, the criteria forselection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection.

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3. Web service

A **Web service** is a method of communication between two electronic devices over the World Wide Web. A **Web service** is a software function provided at a network address over the web or the cloud, it is a service that is "always on" as in the concept of utility computing [3].

3.1 Motivation of research problem

1. What are the benefits of developing self-portfolios in social networking site?
2. What are the benefits of uploading certificates in our profile?
3. What are the benefits of using chat rooms in our site?

4. Social Network Sites

We define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.

While we use the term "social network site" to describe this phenomenon, the term "social networking sites" also appears in public discourse, and the two terms are often used interchangeably. We chose not to employ the term "networking" for two reasons: emphasis and scope. "Networking" emphasizes relationship initiation, often between strangers. While networking is possible on these sites, it is not the primary practice on many of them, nor is it what differentiates them from other forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC) [5].

What makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks. This can result in connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal, and these meetings are frequently between "latent ties" (Haythornthwaite, 2005) who share some offline connection. On many of the large SNSs, participants are not necessarily "networking" or looking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network. To emphasize this articulated social network as a critical organizing feature of these sites, we label them "social network sites."

4.1 A History of Social Network Sites The Early Years

According to the definition above, the first recognizable social network site launched in 1997. SixDegrees.com allowed users to create profiles, list their Friends and, beginning in 1998, surf the Friends lists. Each of these features existed in some form before SixDegrees, of course. Profiles existed on most major dating sites and manycommunity sites. AIM and ICQ buddy lists supported lists of Friends, although those Friends were not visible to others. Classmates.com allowed people to affiliate with their high school or college and surf the network for others who were also affiliated, but users could not create profiles or list Friends until years later. SixDegrees was the first to combine these features.

SixDegrees promoted itself as a tool to help people connect with and send messages to others. While SixDegrees attracted millions of users, it failed to become a sustainable business and, in 2000, the service closed. Looking back, its founder believes that SixDegrees was simply ahead of its time (A. Weinreich, personal communication, July 11, 2007). While people were already flocking to the Internet, most did not have extended networks of friends who were online. Early adopters complained that there was little to do after accepting Friend requests, and most users were not interested in meeting strangers[10].

From 1997 to 2001, a number of community tools began supporting various combinations of profiles and publicly articulated Friends. AsianAvenue, BlackPlanet, and MiGente allowed users to create personal, professional, and dating profiles—users could identify Friends on their personal profiles without seeking approval for those connections (O. Wasow, personal communication, August 16, 2007). Likewise, shortly after its launch in 1999, LiveJournal listed one-directional connections on user pages. LiveJournal's creator suspects that he fashioned these Friends after instant messaging

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buddy lists (B. Fitzpatrick, personal communication, June 15, 2007)—on LiveJournal, people mark others as Friends to follow their journals and manage privacy settings. The Korean virtual worlds site Cyworld was started in 1999 and added SNS features in 2001, independent of these other sites (see Kim & Yun, this issue). Likewise, when the Swedish web community LunarStorm refashioned itself as an SNS in 2000, it contained Friends lists, guestbooks, and diary pages (D. Skog, personal communication, September 24, 2007).

The next wave of SNSs began when Ryze.com was launched in 2001 to help people leverage their business networks. Ryze's founder reports that he first introduced the site to his friends—primarily members of the San Francisco business and technology community, including the entrepreneurs and investors behind many future SNSs (A. Scott, personal communication, June 14, 2007). In particular, the people behind Ryze, Tribe.net, LinkedIn, and Friendster were tightly entwined personally and professionally. They believed that they could support each other without competing (Festa, 2003). In the end, Ryze never acquired mass popularity, Tribe.net grew to attract a passionate niche user base, LinkedIn became a powerful business service, and Friendster became the most significant, if only as "one of the biggest disappointments in Internet history" (Chafkin, 2007, p. 1)[12].

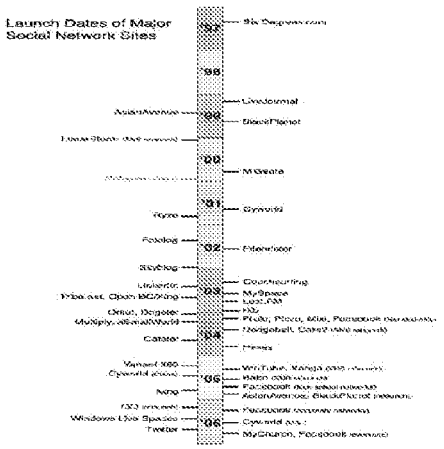


Figure 1. Timeline of the launch dates of many major SNSs and dates when community sites re-launched with SNS features. Like any brief history of a major phenomenon, ours is necessarily incomplete. In the following section we discuss Friendster, MySpace, and Facebook, three key SNSs that shaped the business, cultural, and research landscape.

4.2 Networks and Network Structure

Social network sites also provide rich sources of naturalistic behavioral data. Profile and linkage data from SNSs can be gathered either through the use of automated collection techniques or through datasets provided directly from the company, enabling network analysis researchers to explore large-scale patterns of friending, usage, and other visible indicators (Hogan, in press), and continuing an analysis trend that started with examinations of blogs and other websites [12]. For instance, Golder, Wilkinson, and Huberman (2007) examined an anonymized dataset consisting of 362 million messages exchanged by over four million Facebook users for insight into Friending and messaging activities. Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfield (2007) explored the relationship between profile elements and number of Facebook friends, finding that profile fields that reduce transaction costs and are harder to falsify are most likely to be associated with larger number of friendship links. These kinds of data also lend themselves well to analysis through network visualization (Adamic, Büyükkökten, & Adar, 2003; Heer&boyd, 2005; Paolillo& Wright, 2005).

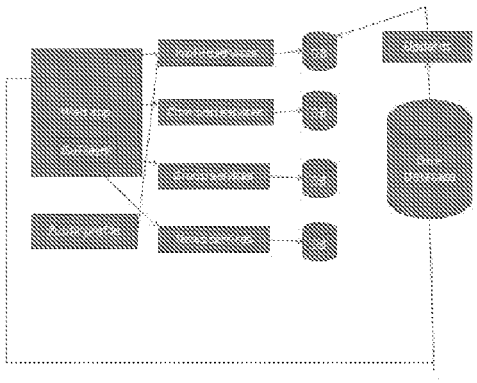
5. Research objective

1. The most important benefit of developing self-portfolio in social networking site is solving storage problem associated with traditional paper based portfolios,additionally instructors can easily comment on learners work by tap into the portfolio,also anyone in the world can be granted access to the portfolio and students can have perfect control on what artifacts can be presented and who can see them.

2. The important benefit of uploading certificates in our profile is solving the problem of taking the traditional paper based certificates for an interview; attending an online examination these certificates in our profile can be used.

3. Chat rooms are available for the users who wants to interact and communicate with the professionals in any domain the user is interested discuss about the ideas, ask solutions about the problems.

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6. Conclusion

Portfolio can facilitate long-life, meaningful learning. Besides the students developed more self-monitoring and self-regulation and self-assessment by producing more reflective works. In the recent mode of instruction the educators can keep in touch with learners and provide editing fast online feedback as a guide and simulator and facilitator rather than proving the correct answer. Taking participants reflections into consideration the teacher can promote learners responsibility and feeling of ownership toward their portfolio. Consequently it would support students to use portfolio as a tool in order to promote their learning process.

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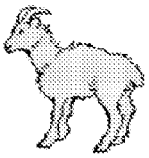
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LiveJournal.com

What is LiveJournal.com?

LiveJournal.com is a free service that allows you to create and customize your very own "live journal" ... an online journal that you can update with short entries many times a day, or with long entries a few times a week... however you'd like to use it. It's free, it's fun, it's easy to use!



***"Baaaah,"* says Frank.**

How do I use my LiveJournal?

It's easy!!! You update your LiveJournal whevnever you want either on the web, or by a small easy-to-use program you install on your computer.

Perhaps the best way to understand LiveJournal is to see it in action. Look at the LiveJournals of Eli and Evan. See how LiveJournal users Brad and Erik have integrated their LiveJournals right into their personal homepage!

So come and create your very own LiveJournal. Let the world know the story of your life, as it happens! *(whether they want to or not)*

Create your own LiveJournal!

Getting Started

Create A Journal
Come and create your very own LiveJournal!

Download
Download a version of the LiveJournal update tool for your computer.

Update Journal
Update your LiveJournal online.

Customize Journal
Customize the appearance and options for your LiveJournal.

Other Options

Edit Personal Info
Edit your personal information and preferences.

Edit Journal Entries
Edit or delete journal entries you've made in the past.

Edit Your Friends
Edit your list of online LiveJournal friends to track from your LiveJournal friends page.

Tech Support & Documentation

Support
Mail the support team and get a quick answer to your question.

Developer Info
Information about the LiveJournal protocol, style system, and journal embedding.

Contributors
Who made LiveJournal? Come and find out. We're doing this for you, afterall.

Banner Ads
Want to spread the word about how cool LiveJournal is? Use these banners!

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× Log In

» Home
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- Full Update
- Download

× LiveJournal
- News
- Paid Accounts
- To-Do list

» Customize
- Modify Journal
- Create Style
- Edit Style

× Find Users
- Random!
- By Region
- By Interest
- Search

» Find Entries
- By Topic

× Edit ...
- Personal Info & Settings
- Your Friends
- Old Entries
- Your Password

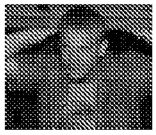
» Developer Area

» Need Help?
- Lost Password?
- Freq. Asked Questions
- Support Area

User Info

User Information

Below is user information for Brad Fitzpatrick. If you are this user, you can edit your information (or choose what information is considered public) at the Edit Info page.



User: **bradfitz** (1)

Name: Brad Fitzpatrick

Text Message: Send **bradfitz** a text message on his cellphone/pager.

Website: bradfitz.com

Location: Seattle, Washington, United States

Birthdate: 1980-02-05

Email: bradfitz@bradfitz.com
bradfitz@livejournal.com

AOL IM: SirBradly (**Add Buddy**, **Send Message**)

ICQ UIN: 489151 (**Add User**, **Send Message**)

Bio: Computer Science student at the University of Washington in Seattle. CS people scare me. Don't be a CS major... you won't learn anything applicable to real life. Go study something fun. Go study in a department that has more than 7 girls.

For fun I sleep. (I must not have much fun.)

Naah, but seriously... um. Wait, I'm never really too serious. Blah.

I make websites. Websites stress me out. I have companies around my websites. Companies stress me out. I think I need a big staff to help me run some of this stuff. But wait, a big staff requires a big budget to pay the big staff. I need venture capital. But wait, that dried up in March. I think I need a good revenue model. Paid accounts work pretty well... I need to make those more attractive.

Ah crap, I'm rambling. It's 3:42 am.

Interests: alternative music, anthropology, beach, beer, biking, blowing things up, boating, c, caffeine, cannon beach, cars, cheese, company, compression, computer science, computers, cuddling, databases, dr. pepper, drinking, dvds, ethiopian food, explosions, fire, free software, friends, frisbee, fsf, genetics, gnome, goats, gpl, grass, gtk, hacking, home theater, iced tea, java, jumping off things, learning, linguistics, linux, livejournal, macaroni and cheese, math, meatballs, mexican food, modest mouse, movies, mp3s, music, networking, night, open source, optimization, oregon, perl, pop

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tarts, portland, programming, rain, rap, running, sand, science, seattle, skiing, sleep, sleeping, snow skiing, solitude, sql, subway, swimming, techno music, traveling, trees, unix, volleyball, washington, water, white water rafting, wireless, women, word booty

Friends: **38:** 5251, achoo, ahze, anilnaik, blythe, bradfitz, cole88, daberna, dana, demo, djdegree, eli, erik, evan, garrettpalm, ian, kailani, kelly, leanora, loserjabber, mattrope, megan, mrwiz, news, nick, nolegs, olliejeff, patrick, paula, quill, revjim, rhys, rodester, sahrie, sandy, sheehan, shortypoke, whitaker

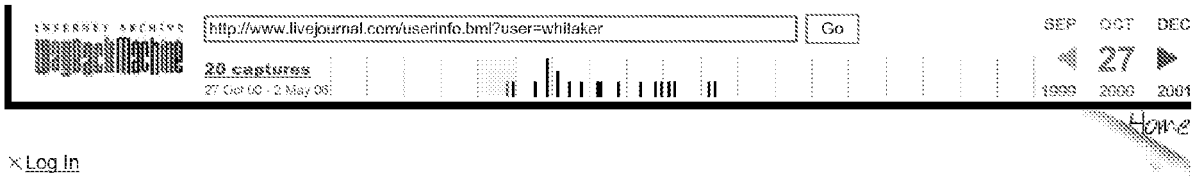
Friend of: **197:** 5251, absolution, achoo, agent_orange, ahze, ajose, alachicky, alexl, alysia, amberskye, ameigirl, amygirl, anabella, andrew, angelfsh, anilnaik, annalytical, annegirl, art, axodys, azulskies, babytears81, belladonna, bethany, billijean, blythe, bradfitz, carley, carrietherage, catscratch, celiacam, chelle, chrisg, chubbyd, chuck, cino101, circlek, clf, cole88, comius, compfreak, cyph, czircon, d4b, daberna, dabigguy, dana, dani, dankitti, dannisan, darksight, daydream, deathskull, demo, detritus, djdegree, dpb, durandal, dweezil, edmcbride, eli, emmet, epiphany, erik, evan, firelegend, freshie, gabby_bc, gadfly, garrettpalm, geekgrrrl, gigglecam, gorgonous, gramcracker, grapek0olaid, greg, hamster, harvey, headcase, heathers, hellothere, herrzoot, homewrecker, hubbycam, ian, iloveholly, insomnia, ironhead1957, ironman1231, itchi, jacqui, jannygirl, jenacam, jesse, jimmiebeeee, jlb, jodilyn, jonny, josh, joylugod, kailani, kea, kelly, kill, kishore, kneb, leanora, leslie03, lianne, lizvang, loserjabber, lovepotion69, magicwoman, marcoo, marcus, martmart, mattrope, megan, mhek, mikeage, missily, mobley, moonsis, mrwiz, mudflapgirl, mucrte, myfriends, nick, nine, nolegs, nycgallucy, obelus, obitus, olliejeff, onejdc, opalcat, opaldreams, orangecone, outsider, patrick, paula, peekaboo, petfish, petit_chou, phalen, pinkycam, plastik, princess, princessa, punquin, quill, revjim, rhys, risingentropy, robobrien, rodester, rosarita, samr7, sandy, scadawg, seer, sephire, shannonkringen, shen_yizhe, shortypoke, shuet, shuperstar, skeeter853, skeets, southernbelleca, starla, stef2dope, steve, steve_maximus, stompmgood, sunshine_two, susan0406, sylvie, teferi, test, thp, tommyx, trinity, tsutton, twjordan, twoseventy, tydel, val, vettybird, visions, warrend, whitaker, wilco, xmf42, yizhe, yourmother, zuul

Account type: Permanent Account

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  - Modify Journal
  - Create Style
  - Edit Style
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  - By Interest
  - Search
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  - By Topic
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  - Personal Info & Settings
  - Your Friends
  - Old Entries
  - Your Password
- Developer Area
- Need Help?
  - Lost Password?
  - Freq. Asked Questions
  - Support Area

User Info

User Information

Below is user information for Brad Whitaker. If you are this user, you can edit your information (or choose what information is considered public) at the Edit Info page.

User: **whitaker** (15)

Name: Brad Whitaker

Text Message: Send **whitaker** a text message on their cellphone/pager.

Website: bradland.com

Location: Trenton, Ohio, United States

Birthdate: 1982-09-17

Email: brad@bradland.com
whitaker@livejournal.com

AOL IM: bradwhit2 (**Add Buddy**, **Send Message**)

ICQ UIN: 15985610 (**Add User**, **Send Message**)

Bio: I am Brad. I am interesting. You should read my LiveJournal. You should also give me lots of money, but I guess no matter what you should do, you're going to do no whatever you want. I like programming, I like PERL, I like lots of stuff. Lots of stuff also pisses me off. Program a lot... too much. I also do a lot of sitting on my ass. I should get more done, but I'm just stupid like that. I have a website which I should probably update: bradland.com. Maybe if you bug me enough, I'll update it... probably not. However, if you get on AIM and just start talking about useless stuff, that'll probably get my attention, I waste time with the best of em. Yeah, you should probably be able to find anything you'd ever want to know about me at one place ont he net or another, so I think I'm just going to stop typing this now.

Interests: apache, belinda, boating, computers, dr. dre, dvds, linux, money, mp3, music, nextel, perl, php, programming, skiing, sleeping, snoop, soccer, sql, two-way radios

Friends: **20:** 5251, ajslamka, basketballjones, becky1399, big_al, bradfitz, caralou, d4b, damn_the_man, erik, jesus, jgambrell, josh, lloyd, news, nolegs, spanishprincess, treehugger, whitaker, zaneboyyy

Friend of: **34:** ajslamka, basketballjones, becky1399, big_al, bradfitz, callie, caralou, catscratch, d4b, damn_the_man, datoppestari, diva, donkey, eli, elizabethwolf, evilrex, intech, jesus, jgambrell, jimmy, josh, lloyd, minutemaid, mo, necrolyr69, nieman, nolegs, reno, spanishprincess, treehugger, tydel, whitaker, xmf42, zaneboyyy

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INTERNET ARCHIVE Wayback Machine http://www.livejournal.com/users/eli Go
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Eli Lehmann's LiveJournal



[Most Recent Entries] [Calendar View] [Friends]

Below is a log of the past 20 items recorded in Eli Lehmann's LiveJournal.

Sunday, June 18th, 2000

5:49 pm Taylor and I cleaned my Dad's car for him this morning. Then went to one of our baby cousin's birthday party. I'm heading up the gorge now, going to get home, try to organize my room and get ready for work. Start at 7:00 tomorrow, I haven't been awake at 7:00 in a very long time.

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

10:04 am ::YAWN::

(Comment on this)

12:17 am Taylor and I just got back from 'Gone in 60 Seconds'. Definitely not the best movie I've ever seen but still worth the money. Plot was kind of sketchy, dialouge almost matched that of Arnold Schwartzenager in 'Batman Forever' but the sexy cars and Angelina Jolie made it worth it. Liked it more than the all of the reviewers so that was cool. Think I'm going to head to bed now, hopefully I'll get some sleep tonight.

(5 Comments | Comment on this)

Saturday, June 17th, 2000

3:28 pm Best Breasts goes to the girl in the pink halter top...Hands Down!!!

(This is btw going to be a fairly long post, just warning)The show and the trip was Awesome. Dana and I made it to central Washington Friday afternoon and rescued Kailani from some RV park/campground. She was waiting for us there, talking to a Texan employee about their earlier life selling cocaine. She was happy to see us. She hopped in our car and we drove a few miles to George, Washington (No, I'm not kidding that's actually the name of the town).

The Gorge Amphitheater is basically the best outdoor concert environment imaginable. It's in the middle of nowhere so it doesn't matter how loud you are. Every single person there is there for the exact same reason, to see a concert and have a damn good time in doing so. And, there's even a campground so that all of the drugged up, stoned, horny, drunken youthfull party-goers that we're forced to call "peers" can continue having a good time into the late hours of the night.

We paid our $25 camping pass, walked back and forth between our car and the Ticket office a couple of extra times because SOMEBODY forgot to put their purse in the car :-) and were eventually ready to head down into the gorge. (This all of course after I applied a heavy dosage of Sure Powder Fresh deodarant to my *underarms*...forgot my damn deodarant at home.)

Dana, Kailani and I are walking along the pedestrian trail (basically a huge gravel road) that leads us down into the amphitheater when I hear Kailani give a very faint squeal and dart backwards. I glance down and there sure enough, no more than 4 feet away, is a rattlesnake slithering across the path(This was quite ironic because just a few hours earlier on the car ride over I was talking to dana about how I used to have to work around rattlesnakes, and, how I had developed quite the distaste for the poisonous bastards). I grab and stop Dana (she didn't see it) then stop 5 or 6 other people who were walking along the trial also oblivious (thank god Kailani saw it, could have been bad.) Some dumb-ass punk teenagers were like "hey let's catch it, let's catch it." (::sigh::) The concert staff wasn't to far away so we yelled to them and they took care of it. We continued on and soon became apart of the mass of skin(it was really really hot so everybody was skimping pretty heavily on the clothing, ..and yeah, you already know where this leads) that was headed past the ticket gates and into the amphitheater.

The amphitheater itself was really cool. There's a huge grass hill for people to sit on, and then the floor up front for everybody who wants to get up close and personal. The cliffs and river make an awesome backdrop, the sun sets right behind the band. It's a very cool place to have a concert. We walk down to the floor right in front of the stage, and find our other friends chilling in what little shade was provided by a side fence. Went and sat with them for the next 2 and a half hours, entertained ourselves by making fun

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of everybody's outfits.

7:30, concert Starts. Everybody rushes up to the state to listen to Fenix TX. They're a strong punk band who managed to get the crowd pumped up without any problem at all. I'm looking foward to seeing them again at Big Stink later this summer. By they time they finish playing Dana and I have pretty much lost everybody else. We decide to head up to where the crowd gets a little more rowdy during the break between sets.

The girl upfront in the black was the first to start it. You see her rise up above the crowd on the shoulders of a willing soul. Then, the little clothing that has up until now held her bare chest invisible to our eyes, suddenly dissapears. Cheers and whistles follow, then another girl pops up out of the crowd, heads turn, and the cylce repeats itself...over and over and over. God, you've just really got to appreciate a good *concert* ;-)

Bad Religion, an old school punk rock band, starts up the next set and the flashing dies down. Dana and I are getting shoved around like the best of them now. I do my best to try and protect her/help her out, but it get's pretty rowdy in there. People shoving you, flying above you, lots of fun. Dana has finally had enough, she leaves and I push farther into the crowd. I'm probably 5 rows back from the boards/security guards and I see a family friend Kevin Whitson, insane to run into him in the middle of this mosh pit. (Kevin is 6'4 and a good 240lbs, state shotput champion...a good friend to have in a mosh pit, I hang around him)

Bad Religion finishes, I have no idea where any of my friends are and Kevin heads out of the crowd, says I should go with him but there was no way I was backing out just before blink. It's dark, and more flashing commences. The girl in the pink halter top, the one I'd mentioned before is getting quite the bit of attention. Everybody is screaming for her to flash but she's kind of hesitant. She lifts her shirt up but the bra remains on, obviously nobody is satisfied. Finally she goes for it and at least 50 camera flashes go off. As I said before, she without a doubt gets the best breasts of the night award ;-)

It's dark, Blink runs onto the stage and everybody goes crazy. By the second song I somehow manage to shove my way to a spot on the boards (very front row, only thing left between me and the band is this wodden barricade and a row of security guards.)

Blink was awesome, I love their music the show was great, I was completely stoked to be so close. Probably the best part about the band is their sense of humor. They incorporated some Eminem lyrics into one of the songs, and then they made fun of that damn 'thong song' by running out in nothing more than their boxers and shaking their asses at the crowd to the music. Damn good show.

My ribs feel like I've just been through a boxing match, my head, aching with bumps from the shoes of the crowd-surfers. Every time I touch my right ear it hurts like hell, my nose got smacked pretty hard by somebody's head so that doesn't feel to great either. My sunglasses fell victim to the stopping crowd, my necklace was ripped off my neck by the wandering hand of a crowd-surfer grasping desperatly for something to hold onto. At the end of the show I find Dana and Kailani, my shirt is completely soaked(I don't however have BO thanks to that Sure Powder Fresh). We walk back to the campground, don't manage to fall asleep until 3:30 and drive home this morning exhausted. "But was it worth it you ask?" OH HELL YES!!!

(8 Comments | Comment on this)

Thursday, June 15th, 2000

9:56 pm LOL. Well since Erik has been sharing some of his wonderfull FreeVote emails with you I'm going to have to post this one. The booth name is "Wuz Your Favorite Soda" and this guy wants it shut down because...
"I hate coke and i want this site taken away cuz me and this kid had a fight about cookies"

Tempting, but probably not enough to justify a booth suspension ;-)

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(2 Comments | Comment on this)

9:35 pm We shampooed the carpet in my room today so EVERYTHING is off of the ground. I'm not supposed to walk in my room for 24 hours because it'll get it dirty so I dodged this problem by wrapping my shoes in some plastic wrap. Looks really damn retarded, I however prefer to refer to it as *ingenious*. So I'm sitting on my bed with my keyboard and looking between 2 massive speakers that are sitting on my desk to see my monitor. I do not think my room has ever been this clean. You should see the hallway. I guess Dana is showing up tomorrow at 10:30 and we're going to head to the Blink concert (Think she's just going to follow me there) so tomorrow should be a really good day. Been waiting for blink for quite awhile. Wow, the moon is really full and is rising above this huge tree outside my windo.. looks really cool. Wonder if it's full tonight. Anyway, think I'm going to worka little FreeVote from my re-arranged workstation, should be interesting.

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

1:28 pm Home now, got back about 30 minutes ago. Really nice day so that's cool. I took my clothes out of the laundry this morning at my dad's and about half of my shirts were ruined from bleach stains. I guess they used tide WITH BLEACH and there was too much or something..dont' know. But that really sucks. Guess I just found some new work shirts. Think I'm going to go out on a bike-ride. It's way to nice to be inside.

(Comment on this)

Wednesday, June 14th, 2000

11:41 pm LOL...listening to loveline and this guy calls up and asks adam for the correct technique for anal sex. Adam goes ..well lets just say I wouldn't go for the running start approach, you're gonna need some lube.....heheh..funny stuff.

(Comment on this)

11:29 pm Decided to stay in Vancouver. My dad and I watched some show on TV about rescues and stuff, pretty cool I guess. I'm talking to Kyle about work. (he has pretty much the same job as I do but in a different place) He got 40 minutes and 37 seconds on the pack test today. I'm going to have to try and beat that :-) So yeah, neck burns, bored, not tired, but think I might have to head to bed here pretty soon.

(Comment on this)

10:03 pm So, we finished detailing my car, looks really nice. I talked to Erik and it looks like he's not coming down for the Blink concert afterall. Dana may or may not ride up with me I'm not sure, I might be riding solo. My neck is getting sore from the sun earlier, sure I'm going to have a nice red burn there in the morning. Was going to hang out here tonight but think I might just head up the gorge. Everybody goes to bed early so not much to do.

(Comment on this)

3:01 pm Well, looks like Dana isn't riding with me to blink anymore (think she's going to follow me or meet me there) and possibly not Erik either (but he's still planning) I'm going to head outside and clean my car... my dad and I are going to give it the really good througouh clean. Got a little sun earlier when I was out there so hopefully I'm not burnt before I get to blink.

(3 Comments | Comment on this)

11:15 am Damn car won't start. I think the battery died while I was away at school and not driving. I hooked it up to the charger and am now pressure washing the driveway waiting for it to charge. Fun fun fun

(Comment on this)

9:38 am Woke up kind of early, have to go get the snow tires taken off of my car. Drew Erik a map to my house here in Vancouver, think he'll probably show up sometime around 6 or 7 tonight. Off to the tire company.

(4 Comments | Comment on this)

12:24 am Wow, they're playing Kottonmouth Kings on the radio, just thought I'd let Ian know.

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

Tuesday, June 13th, 2000

11:19 pm LOL...listening to loveline, this chick calls up, sounds stoned off her ass and says, "uhhhhh..I was wondering what the uhhh...effects of acid are after 50 hits." :tmgh::

(2 Comments | Comment on this)

10:48 pm finally saw the new bond movie, it was pretty good I guess. My sinuses have been going crazy since I got down here, always do. Listening to some more love line, going to draw dana a map to my house.

(Comment on this)

7:02 pm Ahh Yeah!!!

(2 Comments | Comment on this)

4:25 pm Down at my Dad's.. just got a haircut. I'm talking to dana online, trying to give her directions to my house in willard so that she'll have a ride to blink, but she seems to be more interested in playing with her cat.

(Comment on this)

12:43 pm Lunch time...Ice Cream again :-)

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Going to try to clean up the hallway a bit and then head to my dad's. Going to hang out there tonight and then come home tomorrow.

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

Monday, June 12th, 2000

11:02 pm Sitting here listening to Loveline on the radio. I used to listen to this all the time in high school from 9th grade on. Bringing me back.

(2 Comments | Comment on this)

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8 captures 8 Feb 00 - 8 Mar 02
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Eli Lehmann's Friends

[Most Recent Entries] [Calendar View] [Friends View]

Below is a log of the past **25** LiveJournal entries that Eli Lehmann's friends have entered.

Saturday, June 10th, 2000

whitaker

7:37a Awake. Feel like shit. Need a day to sleep in.

(Comment on this)

starla

5:58a it's almost freakin' 6 AM and i'm *just* getting to bed... 'cause *someone* kept me up all night... and even though i had an amazing time, laurienne's gonna kick my ass when i'm sleepwalking through our day together, and both she and buttercup will abuse me later at the clubs... oh well! :)

(Comment on this)

marcus



1:26a ***getting more than five hours of sleep tonight, ahhhh yeaahhh***
spent the afternoon checking people out, then chilled with Jamey for a while, maxed out my A La Carde account with $50 of stuff from Steven's, score! Had dinner with Claire, then got her checked out and watched Tommy Boy with Jason and Christy. was going to be with the whole staff, but everyone left really quickly, oh well. Bethany gave us a ride to the airport, so that was really really cool. Thank you so much. It's going to be a long summer, but worth the wait, at Mercer now, going to watch Men in Black, and help Bethany pack and get stuff into her truck. Then try to get some sleep and then checkouts tomorrow morning, bright and early at 9:30. oh yesss.

(Comment on this)

megan

12:46a time to get in bed and gossip :)

(Comment on this)

dana

12:45a way bored, lots more to do than i thought. this is how tired i am....im looking for my bikini bottom to pack cause all i can find is the top, and i dont realize til like 15 minutes later that im actually wearing the thing ::sigh:: time for bed soon

(Comment on this)

bradlitz

12:43a ***Movie***
Went and saw "Gone in 60 seconds" with Nick and Ollie .... pretty good movie. Helping my brother burn a CD now ....

(Comment on this)

12:23a well home from chelan, had a nice three days before i have to go home. got up on the kneeboard. i would be cheering and all but it was super easy so nothing really to brag about. tried wakeboarding today, couldnt get up, next time though im gonna kick some

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dana

butt!!!!took the wave runner out, almost knocked brian off a few times too :-) hehe so now gonna clean up a bit pack, clean the fridge, then brian is going to come over and see me, im leaving tomorrow at like 1115, kinda sad. said goodbye to eli erik marcus and mike on thuesday, that was way sad, but im going to blink on friday with them so shouldnt be too long til i see my s.campus boys. said goodbye to trav on wednesday, another sad one hmmm and val and megan and brittney and monica. what a sad day :-(so tomorrow my mom is gonna get here around 9 supposedly, that is if she doesnt sleep in as always. not much to do around here, getting pretty tired and my arms are sore from the stupid rope getting ripped outa my hands today, so bedtime for me soon i think since im getting up at 8! ahh!! 8 freaking o'clock!!!!

(Comment on this)

lenz

12:11a Home from Chelan. Had an awesome time with Dana. She's gotta go home tomorrow though :(I'm gonna pack up my computer and dishes now so all I have to do tomorrow is check out. Then, off to Dana's...

(Comment on this)

megan

12:08a just got back from Applebee's with some hs people... it was really cool to see everyone and just chat... Kerry and I talked about old times and cleaned up my room earlier so I can get ready to move all my other stuff back into my room.... yes, I do have WAY too much stuff, I realize this :) anyways... not sure what's up now, prooobbably should go to bed soon, but we'll see. I think we have more catching up to do first :0

(**1 Comment** | Comment on this)

Friday, June 9th, 2000

eli



11:57p I'm home now, my room's a complete mess, boxes all over the place....BUT, got my computer unpacked, that's what's importnat. I'll just keep everything else in boxes, that way I won't have to pack back up when I head to school in the fall :-) Probably going to head to bed soon, too tired to attempt to do anything

(Comment on this)

Saturday, June 10th, 2000

starla

2:50a just got in after a night with my buttercup. i still can't believe she's been my bestest friend for almost four whole years... she's so amazing. i was worried we'd be a little strained because of our little tiff, but it was as perfect as ever.

instead of hitting the private party like we were supposed to, we impulsively decided to jump the train to the city and go bar-hopping... even though we were decked out for a par-tay, me in a turquoise tank top and her in red, both of us in black vinyl-esque pants. (i think we just wanted to do some BJ shots -- hehe!) we got such an early start -- 10:30 -- that we wound up enjoying the gorgeous summertime weather and the yummylicious NYC scenery by walking around for a while, eventually winding up at an all-night Starbucks. buttercup had a caramel machiato and a wildberry tiazzi, and i had a white-chocolate mocha and a peach tiazzi. then of course, we had a big ol' sugar high... nothing's more fun than riding the subway with perfect strangers, giggling madly. :)

i love my buttercup so much... when i'm with her i want to cry, because she understands me so well. i can say anything, and she'll never judge me, she usually shares my feelings, from love to school to just rating the cute passerby on the street. i feel stronger, more confident, more beautiful. she truly compliments me and helps me through everything... and when we're together, there's absolutely *nothing* i can't do.

(Comment on this)

Friday, June 9th, 2000

9:40p ***Cable Modem***

Ah yea' ..... today at 6 pm or so the cable guys came and install our cable modem. They

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bradfitz



were gonna install a USB device and I was like, "No ... use an extra ethernet card." And he goes, "Okay, but why?" I say, "So we don't have to run Windows if we don't want." He goes, "But if you don't have Windows, what would you run? How would you use Internet Explorer?" *sigh* Linux, I say. Win98SE's Internet Connection sharing (IP masquerading, or NAT, whatever you want to call it) works okay, but it's still on Windows, so whenever somebody reboots, the house network connection goes down. Anyway, it's all working now, after shitloads of resource conflicts ... the 3rd network card did the trick (an old NE2000 ISA card... heh.) But yeah, hella fast now.... lovin' it.

(**7 Comments** | Comment on this)

megan



8:13p grabbed Mongolian grill for dinner, yum! and ice cream :) diet starts tomorrow, I promise... ooh, I need to call bryan to figure out when I'm going over there to go to his graduation tomorrow... Kerry and I are relaxing now, going to watch Much Ado about Nothing,,,, again. :)

(Comment on this)

whitaker



10:47p Going to get cleaned up and go to bed. Night all.

(Comment on this)

whitaker



10:35p New LiveJournal is cool.

(Comment on this)

whitaker



10:21p Didn't sleep at ALL last night. Fucked with NT instead... and when it became clear that NT would NEVER cooperate, I installed 98 in a half hour, rendering those many hours of toil and sleep loss useless. Then spent a fun filled day at the truck show with my favorite friend, Mr. Andrew Nieman. Got a good hour nap there, then went back to his house and at a sandwich/started a huge file transfer. After that, was driving, my nose started bleeding all over, so I stopped by Belinda's house to clean up, where Belinda was nowhere to be found. Saddened, I went to the theater where I saw Jon & Amy & Carl and other theater people... then Angie and Vance stopped by and I talked to them for a couple of minutes. I'm home now, dreading tomorrow... I'm gonna die... mainly because I'm not very tired right now, but I MUST sleep... but I want to get a shower first. Maybe that will help get me tired. Anyway. Lata'.

(Comment on this)

kaliani



Done with my final, Yay! Now what? I have nothing to do now...I love it :-)

6:48p Eli, the final went well. I was short on time for my essay but that's how it always goes. Glad you got home safe and sound!

(Comment on this)

megan



5:50p I'm home!!! Just drove in and unloaded the U-haul... let me explain... I had to bring the futon and tv home and some of dana's stuff, so it's ok to rent a trailor right??? Anyways, kerry is here now and we're going to go return the trailer and maybe grab dinner. Very happy to be here,,, HAVE AN AWESOME SUMMER EVERYONE!!

(Comment on this)

5:37p ***Heh ...***

My computers are setup in the basement, right next to the ethernet hub for the house, then I have my ethernet hub plugged into that... whenever I move my mouse on my windows machine, the house router blinks on my port, since I'm using x2vnc to use one mouse/keyboard between Linux and Windows.... I need to get a 100mbps switch ... how much do those cost? Hubs are retarded.

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bradfitz

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

nolegs

quake

9:26p

uhoh, somebody just decided to play some quake online... been months but im still kickin ass. just take a look (im mappy)...

owned some lpbs, yeah, i owned them and i will own you too BITCH (still got the shit-talkin in my system)

(Comment on this)

marcus



4:07p

whew!! almost done

spent the last two days running all over the place checking people out, helping people move, saying goodbye to everyone, not eating that well and getting very little sleep. all done with checkouts tonight, and hopefully going out to dinner tonight with Claire, then going to kick back and watch some movies with the staff, then taking Claire to the airport and hopefully getting more than five hours of sleep tonight

(4 Comments | Comment on this)

bradfitz

2:47p

awake

Awake ... finally. Damn mom was annoying ... trying to wake me up all morning. I stayed up 'till 5am ... what to you expect? Woke up to livejournal being down ... I messed with too much stuff last night. Does anybody know how to determine on FreeBSD what FD_SETSIZE is set at in libc? I remember increasing it oh-so-long-ago from its pathetic 256, but can't remember what I set it to ... I need to know to tell Apache, since it can't even figure it out on its own. Evan? Any of Evan's friends?

(12 Comments | Comment on this)

kalani

2:09p

I let Trisha borrow my card to buy some breakfast at Terry Cafe. Those idiots confiscated my card. GRRR! The one person that actually cares whose card you use is working this morning. :::sigh:::

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

nolegs

5:58p

pervert

Amazing how many 15 year old girls try to talk to me on IM, it scares me, I dont wanna be one of those people that talks to little girliez on da intanet. Its hard enough for me to try and talk to someone through any chat type shit, I mean I just dont like 'chat' I prefer face to face talk, but then when its jailbait, shudder, I try not to say anything. and how can it be that today 6 people have started talking to me and 5 of them are 15 year old girls? Its a conspiracy.

(Comment on this)

starla

8:07p

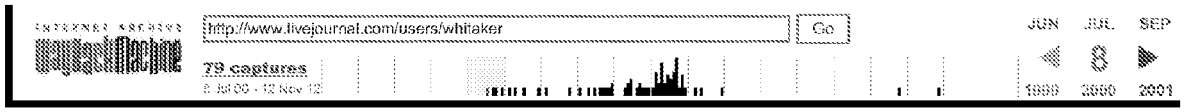
right now i'm watching *happy, texas* with my mommie... but i had a great day at work. not only did i get to leave an hour early (woo!) but the director of the office told me she loved my work, and that all my clientele were incredibly impressed. she also said i had a great phone voice. :) i'm so happy... i finally found a job that i love. :)

speaking of lovingness, my buttercup should be calling soon... woo!

(Comment on this)

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Brad Whitaker's LiveJournal

[Most Recent Entries] [Calendar View] [Friends]

Below are the **20** most recent journal entries recorded in Brad Whitaker's LiveJournal:

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Friday, July 7th, 2000

10:06 am In Alabama. Frickin' tired all day. Ended up having to deplane in Memphis. Don't really remember either of my flights... I trust they were enjoyable. Waiting on Mel to get home so we can head off to the beach. I'll update if I can lata'.

(**1 Comment** | Comment on this)

Thursday, July 6th, 2000

9:41 pm Home from a fun fillled day. Spend the first half of the day at my grandma's after taking her to the oral surgeon. Slept a little there. She fixed me lunch. Got a haircut. Went to Belinda's. Saw Shara's new **VAN**. Heh, classic. Went for a walk. Came home. Called Dad. Lots of stuff to do to get packed/mobilize for my Alabama trip.

(**3 Comments** | Comment on this)

10:14 am Off to get grandma.

(Comment on this)

10:07 am Guess what? As I expected, I'm DEAD today. Heh.

(Comment on this)

6:02 am Need to get in bed here in a few... have to wake up at 10:00.

(Comment on this)

5:52 am Damn. Guess I stayed up a little bit too late. Hrm. At least Postgres is installed properly and working. Even got it in the startup configuration finally.

(Comment on this)

4:47 am PostgreSQL... it's ALIVE! Finally! Damn, am I happy.

(Comment on this)

4:41 am Up at the dark-and early ass-crack of dawn. Have a flight at 7:27. Maybe I'll get to eat some Burger King breakfast this morning? Mmmmmmm... Have badass computer setup ready to go to Alabama/Florida with me. Dunno how much I'll be able to get on the internet... might be able to, might now. Either way, I'll probably jot notes down in Herman... although those won't be posted to the LiveJournal server until I get home. You guys can wait and then read a massive flux of my comments. Heh. I have that terrible feeling again... you know? The one where you know you're forgetting that you're going to get pissed off about when you realize you left it. I decided not to take any DVDs because Nic is taking some and we're going to be away from the house 90% of the time. That, and my bag is full... You guys can email me if you want, not sure if I'll be able to get it. Have laptop and stuff, but it all depends on whether or not the local access numbers I looked up are free (from hotel) and how much Dad decides to bitch about me being on the computer... also, how much free time I have where I shouldn't be out on the beach having fun. Computer shit is slightly lower on the tree than throwing frisbee on the beach. Heh. Lata' all.

(**1 Comment** | Comment on this)

3:31 am Damned Windows... hadn't locked up in a day or two... heh.

(Comment on this)

Wednesday, July 5th, 2000

11:06 pm Damn, I'm being a good boy... I HATE documenting shit.

(Comment on this)

10:09 pm Oh man... just reminded that I have to be at my grandma's house at 10:30 tomorrow morning to take her to the oral surgeon. Heh. Suck.

(**1 Comment** | Comment on this)

9:34 pm Watched some TV for the first time in a while. Called Nic. Everything's cool for friday. Working now. Hrm. Does the "f" in "friday" need to be capitalized?

(**1 Comment** | Comment on this)

9:04 pm Shoot... left AIM on AGAIN. Oops.

(Comment on this)

3:41 pm ...after several naps.

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(Comment on this)

3:41 pm Finally got a shower...

(Comment on this)

12:09 pm Jon woke me up at the ungodly hour of 11:00. We played with Atari a bit... now watching Fight Club DVD parts...

(Comment on this)

3:37 am Time to stop screwing around and go to sleep... I should go to sleep earlier... I'm a dumbass... who's going to take some initiative and force me to go to sleep early???

(Comment on this)

12:25 am Damn, all I have to do is mention that I am having some Linux trouble and everyone wants to help me. Heh.

(Comment on this)

12:21 am Home. Fun day. Hung out with family at Cindy's.. then met Zane, Danielle, Tyler, and Jill and went to Applebee's then saw Gone in 60 Seconds... then went to UDF... THEN watched fireworks. Heh.

(Comment on this)

Tuesday, July 4th, 2000

1:53 pm Zane... "fun fun fun" didn't mean I wasn't excited. Don't get sad. ;-)

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

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Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt	
EFS ID:	18040313
Application Number:	13946461
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	9140
Title of Invention:	RECIPROCAL INSERTION OF IDENTIFICATION ELEMENTS FOR WEB PAGES
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO
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Filing Date:	19-JUL-2013
Time Stamp:	21:51:26
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	no

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Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1	Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) Form (SB08)	8201-0013_IDS_01-27-14.pdf	612686 957ea04fcf45bdae2048beee121442f28035dcfda8	no	4
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3	Non Patent Literature	8201_BlackPlanet_PA_01-27-14.pdf	498308 4c427d832bf91a92561ddb293956a4c545a15ca1	no	10
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4	Non Patent Literature	8201_Kumar_PA_01-27-14.pdf	328390 710589df09d2467389fe07d162521d785d2cd162	no	4
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5	Non Patent Literature	8201_LiveJournal_PA_01-27-14.pdf	1366794 c283c638bdb5d9fc5e583e433fb3824505a3b4d3	no	15
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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (**Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)**		
	Application Number	13946461
	Filing Date	2013-02-08
	First Named Inventor	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	2172
	Examiner Name	PESIN, BORIS
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0013

U.S.PATENTS						Remove
Examiner Initial*	Cite No	Patent Number	Kind Code[1]	Issue Date	Name of Patentee or Applicant of cited Document	Pages,Columns,Lines where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear
	1	5560006	A	1996-09-24	LAYDEN et al.	
	2	5787254	A	1998-07-28	MADDALOZZO JR. et al.	
	3	5995099	A1	1999-11-30	HORSTMANN	
	4	6035334	A	2000-03-07	MARTIN et al.	
	5	6199111	B1	2001-03-06	HARA et al.	
	6	8589222	B1	2013-11-19	DISTEFANO III	
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	Filing Date	2013-02-08
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	Art Unit	2172
	Examiner Name	PESIN, BORIS
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	1	0016210	WO	A1	2000-03-23	NEXCHANGE CORP.		☐
	2	9923591	WO	A1	1999-05-14	SAGE ENTERPRISES INC.		☐
	3	0021012	WO	A2	2000-04-13	ELECTRONIC COMMERCE & CATALOG SERVICES, INC.		☐
	4	0140968	WO	A2	2001-06-07	MOGHUL		☐
	5	H10301911	JP	A	1998-11-13	FUJITSU LTD.		☒
	6	H10162029	JP	A	1998-06-19	DAEWOO ELECTRON CO. LTD.		☒
	7	20000012595	KR	A	2000-03-06	WEBEASY CORP.		☒

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	1	LAZAR, J., "THE 10 BIGGEST BLUNDERS THAT BUSINESSES MAKE ON THE WEB," [online] Adapted from Interactive Age, May 22, 1995. Copyright 1995, Lazar Productions [retrieved 04/24/14] retrieved from the Internet: <http://www.jr.co.il/training/web01.txt>, 4 PG.	☐
	2	KENNEDY, D.M., "PRACTICE MANAGEMENT: SITE PLAN 12 STEPS TO PROMOTING YOUR WEBSITE," [online] In General Practice, Solo & Small Firm Division Magazine, Vol. 17, No. 6, Sep. 2000 [retrieved 04/24/14] retrieved from the Internet: <http://www.americanbar.org/newsletter/publications/gp_solo_magazine_home/gp_solo_magazine_index/sep2000kennedy.html>, 4 pg.	☐
	3	"SELLING ONLINE: MORE THAN HITTING A FEW KEYS," In ProQuest, Interactive Daily, Phillips Business Information Corporation © Sep 5, 1995.	☐
	4	PALMER, A. et al., "THE ROLE OF ELECTRONIC COMMERCE IN CREATING VIRTUAL TOURISM DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANISATIONS," [online] In Int'l. J. of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 198-204, 2000.	☐
	5	IYER, S., "FACTORS DISTINGUISHING HIGH TRAFFIC ONLINE STORES FROM LOW TRAFFIC ON-LINE STORES," Thesis - Carleton University, Sprott School of Business, 2000, 94 pg.	☐
	6	SCHWABACH, A., "Intellectual Property: A Reference Handbook," ABC-CLIO, 2007, Pub. Apr. 26, 2007, 318 pg, [Abstract only].	☐
	7	KUMAR, N.S. et al., "Social Networking Site for Self Portfolio,"[online] In UREAT Int'l. J. of Research in Engineering & Advanced Technology, Vol. 1, No. 1, March 2013, retrieved from the Internet: <http://www.ijreat.org/Papers%202013/Volume1/IJREATV1|1055.pdf>, 4 pg.	☐
	8	"LiveJournal.com", [online] LiveJournal, Inc. © 1999, retrieved Jan. 27, 2014, retrieved from the Internet: <http://web.archive.org/web/20000604011251/http://www.livejournal.com/>, 15 pg.	☐
	9	"AsianAvenue.com", [online] Community Connect Inc. © 1997-2000, retrieved Jan. 27, 2014, retrieved from the internet: <https://web.archive.org/web/20000510055338/http://www.asianavenue.com/>, 11 pg.	☐

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
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	Filing Date	2013-02-08
	First Named Inventor	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	2172
	Examiner Name	PESIN, BORIS
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0013

	10	"BlackPlanet.com," [online] BlackPlanet.com © 2000, retrieved Jan. 27, 2014, retrieved from the Internet: <https://web.archive.org/web/20000606010618/http://www.blackplanet.com/>, 10 pg.	☐

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
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	Art Unit	2172
	Examiner Name	PESIN, BORIS
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0013

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Please see 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 to make the appropriate selection(s):

☐ That each item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was first cited in any communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(1).

OR

☐ That no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application, and, to the knowledge of the person signing the certification after making reasonable inquiry, no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was known to any individual designated in 37 CFR 1.56(c) more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(2).

☐ See attached certification statement.

☐ The fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17 (p) has been submitted herewith.

☒ A certification statement is not submitted herewith.

SIGNATURE

A signature of the applicant or representative is required in accordance with CFR 1.33, 10.18. Please see CFR 1.4(d) for the form of the signature.

Signature	/SCOTT D. PAUL/	Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	2014-04-28
Name/Print	SCOTT D. PAUL	Registration Number	42984

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 1 hour to complete, including gathering, preparing and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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The Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-579) requires that you be given certain information in connection with your submission of the attached form related to a patent application or patent. Accordingly, pursuant to the requirements of the Act, please be advised that: (1) the general authority for the collection of this information is 35 U.S.C. 2(b)(2); (2) furnishing of the information solicited is voluntary; and (3) the principal purpose for which the information is used by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is to process and/or examine your submission related to a patent application or patent. If you do not furnish the requested information, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office may not be able to process and/or examine your submission, which may result in termination of proceedings or abandonment of the application or expiration of the patent.

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6. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to another federal agency for purposes of National Security review (35 U.S.C. 181) and for review pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act (42 U.S.C. 218(c)).

7. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the Administrator, General Services, or his/her designee, during an inspection of records conducted by GSA as part of that agency's responsibility to recommend improvements in records management practices and programs, under authority of 44 U.S.C. 2904 and 2906. Such disclosure shall be made in accordance with the GSA regulations governing inspection of records for this purpose, and any other relevant (i.e., GSA or Commerce) directive. Such disclosure shall not be used to make determinations about individuals.

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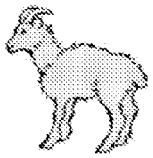
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What is LiveJournal.com?

LiveJournal.com is a free service that allows you to create and customize your very own "live journal" ... an online journal that you can update with short entries many times a day, or with long entries a few times a week... however you'd like to use it. It's free, it's fun, it's easy to use!



***"Baaaah,"* says Frank.**

How do I use my LiveJournal?

It's easy!!! You update your LiveJournal whevnever you want either on the web, or by a small easy-to-use program you install on your computer.

Perhaps the best way to understand LiveJournal is to see it in action. Look at the LiveJournals of Eli and Evan. See how LiveJournal users Brad and Erik have integrated their LiveJournals right into their personal homepage!

So come and create your very own LiveJournal. Let the world know the story of your life, as it happens! *(whether they want to or not)*

Create your own LiveJournal!

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Come and create your very own LiveJournal!

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Download a version of the LiveJournal update tool for your computer.

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Update your LiveJournal online.

Customize Journal
Customize the appearance and options for your LiveJournal.

Other Options

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Edit your personal information and preferences.

Edit Journal Entries
Edit or delete journal entries you've made in the past.

Edit Your Friends
Edit your list of online LiveJournal friends to track from your LiveJournal friends page.

Tech Support & Documentation

Support
Mail the support team and get a quick answer to your question.

Developer Info
Information about the LiveJournal protocol, style system, and journal embedding.

Contributors
Who made LiveJournal? Come and find out. We're doing this for you, afterall.

Banner Ads
Want to spread the word about how cool LiveJournal is? Use these banners!

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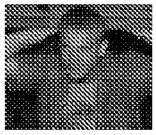
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» Need Help?
- Lost Password?
- Freq. Asked Questions
- Support Area

User Info

User Information

Below is user information for Brad Fitzpatrick. If you are this user, you can edit your information (or choose what information is considered public) at the Edit Info page.



User: **bradfitz** (1)

Name: Brad Fitzpatrick

Text Message: Send **bradfitz** a text message on his cellphone/pager.

Website: bradfitz.com

Location: Seattle, Washington, United States

Birthdate: 1980-02-05

Email: bradfitz@bradfitz.com
bradfitz@livejournal.com

AOL IM: SirBradly (**Add Buddy**, **Send Message**)

ICQ UIN: 489151 (**Add User**, **Send Message**)

Bio: Computer Science student at the University of Washington in Seattle. CS people scare me. Don't be a CS major... you won't learn anything applicable to real life. Go study something fun. Go study in a department that has more than 7 girls.

For fun I sleep. (I must not have much fun.)

Naah, but seriously... um. Wait, I'm never really too serious. Blah.

I make websites. Websites stress me out. I have companies around my websites. Companies stress me out. I think I need a big staff to help me run some of this stuff. But wait, a big staff requires a big budget to pay the big staff. I need venture capital. But wait, that dried up in March. I think I need a good revenue model. Paid accounts work pretty well... I need to make those more attractive.

Ah crap, I'm rambling. It's 3:42 am.

Interests: alternative music, anthropology, beach, beer, biking, blowing things up, boating, c, caffeine, cannon beach, cars, cheese, company, compression, computer science, computers, cuddling, databases, dr. pepper, drinking, dvds, ethiopian food, explosions, fire, free software, friends, frisbee, fsf, genetics, gnome, goats, gpl, grass, gtk, hacking, home theater, iced tea, java, jumping off things, learning, linguistics, linux, livejournal, macaroni and cheese, math, meatballs, mexican food, modest mouse, movies, mp3s, music, networking, night, open source, optimization, oregon, perl, pop

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tarts, portland, programming, rain, rap, running, sand, science, seattle, skiing, sleep, sleeping, snow skiing, solitude, sql, subway, swimming, techno music, traveling, trees, unix, volleyball, washington, water, white water rafting, wireless, women, word booty

Friends: **38:** 5251, achoo, ahze, anilnaik, blythe, bradfitz, cole88, daberna, dana, demo, djdegree, eli, erik, evan, garrettpalm, ian, kailani, kelly, leanora, loserjabber, mattrope, megan, mrwiz, news, nick, nolegs, olliejeff, patrick, paula, quill, revjim, rhys, rodester, sahrie, sandy, sheehan, shortypoke, whitaker

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- By Interest
- Search

» Find Entries
- By Topic

× Edit ...
- Personal Info & Settings
- Your Friends
- Old Entries
- Your Password

» Developer Area

» Need Help?
- Lost Password?
- Freq. Asked Questions
- Support Area

User Info

User Information

Below is user information for Brad Whitaker. If you are this user, you can edit your information (or choose what information is considered public) at the Edit Info page.

User: **whitaker** (15)

Name: Brad Whitaker

Text Message: Send **whitaker** a text message on their cellphone/pager.

Website: bradland.com

Location: Trenton, Ohio, United States

Birthdate: 1982-09-17

Email: brad@bradland.com
whitaker@livejournal.com

AOL IM: bradwhit2 (**Add Buddy**, **Send Message**)

ICQ UIN: 15985610 (**Add User**, **Send Message**)

Bio: I am Brad. I am interesting. You should read my LiveJournal. You should also give me lots of money, but I guess no matter what you should do, you're going to do no whatever you want. I like programming, I like PERL, I like lots of stuff. Lots of stuff also pisses me off. Program a lot... too much. I also do a lot of sitting on my ass. I should get more done, but I'm just stupid like that. I have a website which I should probably update: bradland.com. Maybe if you bug me enough, I'll update it... probably not. However, if you get on AIM and just start talking about useless stuff, that'll probably get my attention, I waste time with the best of em. Yeah, you should probably be able to find anything you'd ever want to know about me at one place ont he net or another, so I think I'm just going to stop typing this now.

Interests: apache, belinda, boating, computers, dr. dre, dvds, linux, money, mp3, music, nextel, perl, php, programming, skiing, sleeping, snoop, soccer, sql, two-way radios

Friends: **20:** 5251, ajslamka, basketballjones, becky1399, big_al, bradfitz, caralou, d4b, damn_the_man, erik, jesus, jgambrell, josh, lloyd, news, nolegs, spanishprincess, treehugger, whitaker, zaneboyyy

Friend of: **34:** ajslamka, basketballjones, becky1399, big_al, bradfitz, callie, caralou, catscratch, d4b, damn_the_man, datoppestari, diva, donkey, eli, elizabethwolf, evilrex, intech, jesus, jgambrell, jimmy, josh, lloyd, minutemaid, mo, necrolyr69, nieman, nolegs, reno, spanishprincess, treehugger, tydel, whitaker, xmf42, zaneboyyy

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Eli Lehmann's LiveJournal



[Most Recent Entries] [Calendar View] [Friends]

Below is a log of the past 20 items recorded in Eli Lehmann's LiveJournal.

Sunday, June 18th, 2000

5:49 pm Taylor and I cleaned my Dad's car for him this morning. Then went to one of our baby cousin's birthday party. I'm heading up the gorge now, going to get home, try to organize my room and get ready for work. Start at 7:00 tomorrow, I haven't been awake at 7:00 in a very long time.

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

10:04 am ::YAWN::

(Comment on this)

12:17 am Taylor and I just got back from 'Gone in 60 Seconds'. Definitely not the best movie I've ever seen but still worth the money. Plot was kind of sketchy, dialouge almost matched that of Arnold Schwartzenager in 'Batman Forever' but the sexy cars and Angelina Jolie made it worth it. Liked it more than the all of the reviewers so that was cool. Think I'm going to head to bed now, hopefully I'll get some sleep tonight.

(5 Comments | Comment on this)

Saturday, June 17th, 2000

3:28 pm Best Breasts goes to the girl in the pink halter top ..Hands Down!!!

(This is btw going to be a fairly long post, just warning)The show and the trip was Awesome. Dana and I made it to central Washington Friday afternoon and rescued Kailani from some RV park/campground. She was waiting for us there, talking to a Texan employee about their earlier life selling cocaine. She was happy to see us. She hopped in our car and we drove a few miles to George, Washington (No, I'm not kidding that's actually the name of the town).

The Gorge Amphitheater is basically the best outdoor concert environment imaginable. It's in the middle of nowhere so it doesn't matter how loud you are. Every single person there is there for the exact same reason, to see a concert and have a damn good time in doing so. And, there's even a campground so that all of the drugged up, stoned, horny, drunken youthfull party-goers that we're forced to call "peers" can continue having a good time into the late hours of the night.

We paid our $25 camping pass, walked back and forth between our car and the Ticket office a couple of extra times because SOMEBODY forgot to put their purse in the car :-) and were eventually ready to head down into the gorge. (This all of course after I applied a heavy dosage of Sure Powder Fresh deodarant to my *underarms*.. forgot my damn deodarant at home.)

Dana, Kailani and I are walking along the pedestrian trail (basically a huge gravel road) that leads us down into the amphitheater when I hear Kailani give a very faint squeal and dart backwards. I glance down and there sure enough, no more than 4 feet away, is a rattlesnake slithering across the path(This was quite ironic because just a few hours earlier on the car ride over I was talking to dana about how I used to have to work around rattlesnakes, and, how I had developed quite the distaste for the poisonous bastards). I grab and stop Dana (she didn't see it) then stop 5 or 6 other people who were walking along the trial also oblivious (thank god Kailani saw it, could have been bad.) Some dumb-ass punk teenagers were like "hey let's catch it, let's catch it." (::sigh::) The concert staff wasn't to far away so we yelled to them and they took care of it. We continued on and soon became apart of the mass of skin(it was really really hot so everybody was skimping pretty heavily on the clothing, ..and yeah, you already know where this leads) that was headed past the ticket gates and into the amphitheater.

The amphitheater itself was really cool. There's a huge grass hill for people to sit on, and then the floor up front for everybody who wants to get up close and personal. The cliffs and river make an awesome backdrop, the sun sets right behind the band. It's a very cool place to have a concert. We walk down to the floor right in front of the stage, and find our other friends chilling in what little shade was provided by a side fence. Went and sat with them for the next 2 and a half hours, entertained ourselves by making fun

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of everybody's outfits.

7:30, concert Starts. Everybody rushes up to the state to listen to Fenix TX. They're a strong punk band who managed to get the crowd pumped up without any problem at all. I'm looking foward to seeing them again at Big Stink later this summer. By they time they finish playing Dana and I have pretty much lost everybody else. We decide to head up to where the crowd gets a little more rowdy during the break between sets.

The girl upfront in the black was the first to start it. You see her rise up above the crowd on the shoulders of a willing soul. Then, the little clothing that has up until now held her bare chest invisible to our eyes, suddenly dissapears. Cheers and whistles follow, then another girl pops up out of the crowd, heads turn, and the cylce repeats itself...over and over and over. God, you've just really got to appreciate a good *concert* ;-)

Bad Religion, an old school punk rock band, starts up the next set and the flashing dies down. Dana and I are getting shoved around like the best of them now. I do my best to try and protect her/help her out, but it get's pretty rowdy in there. People shoving you, flying above you, lots of fun. Dana has finally had enough, she leaves and I push farther into the crowd. I'm probably 5 rows back from the boards/security guards and I see a family friend Kevin Whitson, insane to run into him in the middle of this mosh pit. (Kevin is 6'4 and a good 240lbs, state shotput champion...a good friend to have in a mosh pit, I hang around him)

Bad Religion finishes, I have no idea where any of my friends are and Kevin heads out of the crowd, says I should go with him but there was no way I was backing out just before blink. It's dark, and more flashing commences. The girl in the pink halter top, the one I'd mentioned before is getting quite the bit of attention. Everybody is screaming for her to flash but she's kind of hesitant. She lifts her shirt up but the bra remains on, obviously nobody is satisfied. Finally she goes for it and at least 50 camera flashes go off. As I said before, she without a doubt gets the best breasts of the night award ;-)

It's dark, Blink runs onto the stage and everybody goes crazy. By the second song I somehow manage to shove my way to a spot on the boards (very front row, only thing left between me and the band is this wodden barricade and a row of security guards.)

Blink was awesome, I love their music the show was great, I was completely stoked to be so close. Probably the best part about the band is their sense of humor. They incorporated some Eminem lyrics into one of the songs, and then they made fun of that damn 'thong song' by running out in nothing more than their boxers and shaking their asses at the crowd to the music. Damn good show.

My ribs feel like I've just been through a boxing match, my head, aching with bumps from the shoes of the crowd-surfers. Every time I touch my right ear it hurts like hell, my nose got smacked pretty hard by somebody's head so that doesn't feel to great either. My sunglasses fell victim to the stopping crowd, my necklace was ripped off my neck by the wandering hand of a crowd-surfer grasping desperatly for something to hold onto. At the end of the show I find Dana and Kailani, my shirt is completely soaked(I don't however have BO thanks to that Sure Powder Fresh). We walk back to the campground, don't manage to fall asleep until 3:30 and drive home this morning exhausted. "But was it worth it you ask?" OH HELL YES!!!

(8 Comments | Comment on this)

Thursday, June 15th, 2000

9:56 pm LOL. Well since Erik has been sharing some of his wonderfull FreeVote emails with you I'm going to have to post this one. The booth name is "Wuz Your Favorite Soda" and this guy wants it shut down because...
"I hate coke and i want this site taken away cuz me and this kid had a fight about cookies"

Tempting, but probably not enough to justify a booth suspension :-)

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(2 Comments | Comment on this)

9:35 pm We shampooed the carpet in my room today so EVERYTHING is off of the ground. I'm not supposed to walk in my room for 24 hours because it'll get it dirty so I dodged this problem by wrapping my shoes in some plastic wrap. Looks really damn retarded, I however prefer to refer to it as *ingenious*. So I'm sitting on my bed with my keyboard and looking between 2 massive speakers that are sitting on my desk to see my monitor. I do not think my room has ever been this clean. You should see the hallway. I guess Dana is showing up tomorrow at 10:30 and we're going to head to the Blink concert (Think she's just going to follow me there) so tomorrow should be a really good day. Been waiting for blink for quite awhile. Wow, the moon is really full and is rising above this huge tree outside my windo.. looks really cool. Wonder if it's full tonight. Anyway, think I'm going to worka little FreeVote from my re-arranged workstation, should be interesting.

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

1:28 pm Home now, got back about 30 minutes ago. Really nice day so that's cool. I took my clothes out of the laundry this morning at my dad's and about half of my shirts were ruined from bleach stains. I guess they used tide WITH BLEACH and there was too much or something..dont' know. But that really sucks. Guess I just found some new work shirts. Think I'm going to go out on a bike-ride. It's way to nice to be inside.

(Comment on this)

Wednesday, June 14th, 2000

11:41 pm LOL. .listening to loveline and this guy calls up and asks adam for the correct technique for anal sex. Adam goes ..well lets just say I wouldn't go for the running start approach, you're gonna need some lube.....heheh..funny stuff.

(Comment on this)

11:29 pm Decided to stay in Vancouver. My dad and I watched some show on TV about rescues and stuff, pretty cool I guess. I'm talking to Kyle about work. (he has pretty much the same job as I do but in a different place) He got 40 minutes and 37 seconds on the pack test today. I'm going to have to try and beat that :-) So yeah, neck burns, bored, not tired, but think I might have to head to bed here pretty soon.

(Comment on this)

10:03 pm So, we finished detailing my car, looks really nice. I talked to Erik and it looks like he's not coming down for the Blink concert afterall. Dana may or may not ride up with me I'm not sure, I might be riding solo. My neck is getting sore from the sun earlier, sure I'm going to have a nice red burn there in the morning. Was going to hang out here tonight but think I might just head up the gorge. Everybody goes to bed early so not much to do.

(Comment on this)

3:01 pm Well, looks like Dana isn't riding with me to blink anymore (think she's going to follow me or meet me there) and possibly not Erik either (but he's still planning) I'm going to head outside and clean my car....my dad and I are going to give it the really good throughout clean. Got a little sun earlier when I was out there so hopefully I'm not burnt before I get to Blink.

(3 Comments | Comment on this)

11:15 am Damn car won't start. I think the battery died while I was away at school and not driving. I hooked it up to the charger and am now pressure washing the driveway waiting for it to charge. Fun fun fun

(Comment on this)

9:38 am Woke up kind of early, have to go get the snow tires taken off of my car. Drew Erik a map to my house here in Vancouver, think he'll probably show up sometime around 6 or 7 tonight. Off to the tire company.

(4 Comments | Comment on this)

12:24 am Wow, they're playing Kottonmouth Kings on the radio, just thought I'd let Ian know.

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

Tuesday, June 13th, 2000

11:19 pm LOL...listening to loveline, this chick calls up, sounds stoned off her ass and says. "uhhhhh..I was wondering what the uhhh...effects of acid are after 50 hits." :tmgh::

(2 Comments | Comment on this)

10:48 pm finally saw the new bond movie, it was pretty good I guess. My sinuses have been going crazy since I got down here, always do. Listening to some more love line, going to draw dana a map to my house.

(Comment on this)

7:02 pm Ahh Yeah!!!

(2 Comments | Comment on this)

4:25 pm Down at my Dad's.. just got a haircut. I'm talking to dana online, trying to give her directions to my house in willard so that she'll have a ride to blink, but she seems to be more interested in playing with her cat.

(Comment on this)

12:43 pm Lunch time...Ice Cream again :-)

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Going to try to clean up the hallway a bit and then head to my dad's. Going to hang out there tonight and then come home tomorrow.

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

Monday, June 12th, 2000

11:02 pm Sitting here listening to Loveline on the radio. I used to listen to this all the time in high school from 9th grade on. Bringing me back.

(2 Comments | Comment on this)

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Eli Lehmann's Friends

[Most Recent Entries] [Calendar View] [Friends View]

Below is a log of the past **25** LiveJournal entries that Eli Lehmann's friends have entered.

Saturday, June 10th, 2000

whitaker

7:37a Awake. Feel like shit. Need a day to sleep in.

(Comment on this)

starla

5:58a it's almost freakin' 6 AM and i'm *just* getting to bed... 'cause *someone* kept me up all night... and even though i had an amazing time, laurienne's gonna kick my ass when i'm sleepwalking through our day together, and both she and buttercup will abuse me later at the clubs... oh well! :)

(Comment on this)

marcus



1:26a ***getting more than five hours of sleep tonight, ahhhh yeaahhh***
spent the afternoon checking people out, then chilled with Jamey for a while, maxed out my A La Carde account with $50 of stuff from Steven's, score! Had dinner with Claire, then got her checked out and watched Tommy Boy with Jason and Christy. was going to be with the whole staff, but everyone left really quickly, oh well. Bethany gave us a ride to the airport, so that was really really cool. Thank you so much. It's going to be a long summer, but worth the wait, at Mercer now, going to watch Men in Black, and help Bethany pack and get stuff into her truck. Then try to get some sleep and then checkouts tomorrow morning, bright and early at 9:30. oh yesss.

(Comment on this)

megan

12:46a time to get in bed and gossip :)

(Comment on this)

dana

12:45a way bored, lots more to do than i thought. this is how tired i am....im looking for my bikini bottom to pack cause all i can find is the top, and i dont realize til like 15 minutes later that im actually wearing the thing ::sigh:: time for bed soon

(Comment on this)

bradlitz

12:43a ***Movie***
Went and saw "Gone in 60 seconds" with Nick and Ollie .... pretty good movie. Helping my brother burn a CD now ....

(Comment on this)

12:23a well home from chelan, had a nice three days before i have to go home. got up on the kneeboard. i would be cheering and all but it was super easy so nothing really to brag about. tried wakeboarding today, couldnt get up, next time though im gonna kick some

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dana

butt!!!!took the wave runner out, almost knocked brian off a few times too :-) hehe so now gonna clean up a bit pack, clean the fridge, then brian is going to come over and see me, im leaving tomorrow at like 1115, kinda sad. said goodbye to eli erik marcus and mike on thuesday, that was way sad, but im going to blink on friday with them so shouldnt be too long til i see my s.campus boys. said goodbye to trav on wednesday, another sad one hmmm and val and megan and brittney and monica. what a sad day :-(so tomorrow my mom is gonna get here around 9 supposedly, that is if she doesnt sleep in as always. not much to do around here, getting pretty tired and my arms are sore from the stupid rope getting ripped outa my hands today, so bedtime for me soon i think since im getting up at 8! ahh!! 8 freaking o'clock!!!!

(Comment on this)

lenz

12:11a Home from Chelan. Had an awesome time with Dana. She's gotta go home tomorrow though :(I'm gonna pack up my computer and dishes now so all I have to do tomorrow is check out. Then, off to Dana's...

(Comment on this)

megan

12:08a just got back from Applebee's with some hs people... it was really cool to see everyone and just chat... Kerry and I talked about old times and cleaned up my room earlier so I can get ready to move all my other stuff back into my room.... yes, I do have WAY too much stuff, I realize this :) anyways... not sure what's up now, prooobbably should go to bed soon, but we'll see. I think we have more catching up to do first :0

(**1 Comment** | Comment on this)

Friday, June 9th, 2000

eli



11:57p I'm home now, my room's a complete mess, boxes all over the place....BUT, got my computer unpacked, that's what's importnat. I'll just keep everything else in boxes, that way I won't have to pack back up when I head to school in the fall :-) Probably going to head to bed soon, too tired to attempt to do anything

(Comment on this)

Saturday, June 10th, 2000

starla

2:50a just got in after a night with my buttercup. i still can't believe she's been my bestest friend for almost four whole years... she's so amazing. i was worried we'd be a little strained because of our little tiff, but it was as perfect as ever.

instead of hitting the private party like we were supposed to, we impulsively decided to jump the train to the city and go bar-hopping... even though we were decked out for a par-tay, me in a turquoise tank top and her in red, both of us in black vinyl-esque pants. (i think we just wanted to do some BJ shots -- hehe!) we got such an early start -- 10:30 -- that we wound up enjoying the gorgeous summertime weather and the yummylicious NYC scenery by walking around for a while, eventually winding up at an all-night Starbucks. buttercup had a caramel machiato and a wildberry tiazzi, and i had a white-chocolate mocha and a peach tiazzi. then of course, we had a big ol' sugar high... nothing's more fun than riding the subway with perfect strangers, giggling madly. :)

i love my buttercup so much... when i'm with her i want to cry, because she understands me so well. i can say anything, and she'll never judge me, she usually shares my feelings, from love to school to just rating the cute passerby on the street. i feel stronger, more confident, more beautiful. she truly compliments me and helps me through everything... and when we're together, there's absolutely *nothing* i can't do.

(Comment on this)

Friday, June 9th, 2000

9:40p ***Cable Modem***

Ah yea' ..... today at 6 pm or so the cable guys came and install our cable modem. They

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bradfitz

were gonna install a USB device and I was like, "No ... use an extra ethernet card." And he goes, "Okay, but why?" I say, "So we don't have to run Windows if we don't want." He goes, "But if you don't have Windows, what would you run? How would you use Internet Explorer?" *sigh* Linux, I say. Win98SE's Internet Connection sharing (IP masquerading, or NAT, whatever you want to call it) works okay, but it's still on Windows, so whenever somebody reboots, the house network connection goes down. Anyway, it's all working now, after shitloads of resource conflicts ... the 3rd network card did the trick (an old NE2000 ISA card... heh.) But yeah, hella fast now.... lovin' it.

(7 Comments | Comment on this)

megan

8:13p grabbed Mongolian grill for dinner, yum! and ice cream :) diet starts tomorrow, I promise... ooh, I need to call bryan to figure out when I'm going over there to go to his graduation tomorrow... Kerry and I are relaxing now, going to watch Much Ado about Nothing,,,, again. :)

(Comment on this)

whitaker

10:47p Going to get cleaned up and go to bed. Night all.

(Comment on this)

whitaker

10:35p New LiveJournal is cool.

(Comment on this)

whitaker

10:21p Didn't sleep at ALL last night. Fucked with NT instead... and when it became clear that NT would NEVER cooperate, I installed 98 in a half hour, rendering those many hours of toil and sleep loss useless. Then spent a fun filled day at the truck show with my favorite friend, Mr. Andrew Nieman. Got a good hour nap there, then went back to his house and at a sandwich/started a huge file transfer. After that, was driving, my nose started bleeding all over, so I stopped by Belinda's house to clean up, where Belinda was nowhere to be found. Saddened, I went to the theater where I saw Jon & Amy & Carl and other theater people... then Angie and Vance stopped by and I talked to them for a couple of minutes. I'm home now, dreading tomorrow... I'm gonna die... mainly because I'm not very tired right now, but I MUST sleep... but I want to get a shower first. Maybe that will help get me tired. Anyway. Lata'.

(Comment on this)

kalani

Done with my final, Yay! Now what? I have nothing to do now...I love it :-)

6:48p Eli, the final went well. I was short on time for my essay but that's how it always goes. Glad you got home safe and sound!

(Comment on this)

megan

5:50p I'm home!!! Just drove in and unloaded the U-haul... let me explain... I had to bring the futon and tv home and some of dana's stuff, so it's ok to rent a trailor right??? Anyways, kerry is here now and we're going to go return the trailer and maybe grab dinner. Very happy to be here,,, HAVE AN AWESOME SUMMER EVERYONE!!

(Comment on this)

5:37p ***Heh ...***
My computers are setup in the basement, right next to the ethernet hub for the house, then I have my ethernet hub plugged into that... whenever I move my mouse on my windows machine, the house router blinks on my port, since I'm using x2vnc to use one mouse/keyboard between Linux and Windows.... I need to get a 100mbps switch ... how much do those cost? Hubs are retarded.

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bradfitz

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

nolegs

quake

uhoh, somebody just decided to play some quake online... been months but im still kickin ass. just take a look (im mappy)...

9:26p

owned some lpbs, yeah, i owned them and i will own you too BITCH (still got the shit-talkin in my system)

(Comment on this)

marcus



whew!! almost done

4:07p

spent the last two days running all over the place checking people out, helping people move, saying goodbye to everyone, not eating that well and getting very little sleep. all done with checkouts tonight, and hopefully going out to dinner tonight with Claire, then going to kick back and watch some movies with the staff, then taking Claire to the airport and hopefully getting more than five hours of sleep tonight

(4 Comments | Comment on this)

bradfitz

awake

2:47p

Awake ... finally. Damn mom was annoying ... trying to wake me up all morning. I stayed up 'till 5am ... what to you expect? Woke up to livejournal being down ... I messed with too much stuff last night. Does anybody know how to determine on FreeBSD what FD_SETSIZE is set at in libc? I remember increasing it oh-so-long-ago from its pathetic 256, but can't remember what I set it to ... I need to know to tell Apache, since it can't even figure it out on its own. Evan? Any of Evan's friends?

(12 Comments | Comment on this)

kalani

2:09p

I let Trisha borrow my card to buy some breakfast at Terry Cafe. Those idiots confiscated my card. GRRR! The one person that actually cares whose card you use is working this morning. :::sigh:::

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

nolegs

pervert

5:58p

Amazing how many 15 year old girls try to talk to me on IM, it scares me, I dont wanna be one of those people that talks to little girliez on da intanet. Its hard enough for me to try and talk to someone through any chat type shit, I mean I just dont like 'chat' I prefer face to face talk, but then when its jailbait, shudder, I try not to say anything. and how can it be that today 6 people have started talking to me and 5 of them are 15 year old girls? Its a conspiracy.

(Comment on this)

starla

8:07p

right now i'm watching *happy, texas* with my mommie... but i had a great day at work. not only did i get to leave an hour early (woo!) but the director of the office told me she loved my work, and that all my clientele were incredibly impressed. she also said i had a great phone voice. :) i'm so happy... i finally found a job that i love. :)

speaking of lovingness, my buttercup should be calling soon... woo!

(Comment on this)

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Brad Whitaker's LiveJournal

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Below are the **20** most recent journal entries recorded in Brad Whitaker's LiveJournal:

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Friday, July 7th, 2000

10:06 am In Alabama. Frickin' tired all day. Ended up having to deplane in Memphis. Don't really remember either of my flights... I trust they were enjoyable. Waiting on Mel to get home so we can head off to the beach. I'll update if I can lata'.

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

Thursday, July 6th, 2000

9:41 pm Home from a fun fillled day. Spend the first half of the day at my grandma's after taking her to the oral surgeon. Slept a little there. She fixed me lunch. Got a haircut. Went to Belinda's. Saw Shara's new **VAN**. Heh, classic. Went for a walk. Came home. Called Dad. Lots of stuff to do to get packed/mobilize for my Alabama trip.

(3 Comments | Comment on this)

10:14 am Off to get grandma.

(Comment on this)

10:07 am Guess what? As I expected, I'm DEAD today. Heh.

(Comment on this)

6:02 am Need to get in bed here in a few... have to wake up at 10:00.

(Comment on this)

5:52 am Damn. Guess I stayed up a little bit too late. Hrm. At least Postgres is installed properly and working. Even got it in the startup configuration finally.

(Comment on this)

4:47 am PostgreSQL... it's ALIVE! Finally! Damn, am I happy.

(Comment on this)

4:41 am Up at the dark-and early ass-crack of dawn. Have a flight at 7:27. Maybe I'll get to eat some Burger King breakfast this morning? Mmmmmmm... Have badass computer setup ready to go to Alabama/Florida with me. Dunno how much I'll be able to get on the internet... might be able to, might now. Either way, I'll probably jot notes down in Herman... although those won't be posted to the LiveJournal server until I get home. You guys can wait and then read a massive flux of my comments. Heh. I have that terrible feeling again... you know? The one where you know you're forgetting that you're going to get pissed off about when you realize you left it. I decided not to take any DVDs because Nic is taking some and we're going to be away from the house 90% of the time. That, and my bag is full... You guys can email me if you want, not sure if I'll be able to get it. Have laptop and stuff, but it all depends on whether or not the local access numbers I looked up are free (from hotel) and how much Dad decides to bitch about me being on the computer... also, how much free time I have where I shouldn't be out on the beach having fun. Computer shit is slightly lower on the tree than throwing frisbee on the beach. Heh. Lata' all.

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

3:31 am Damned Windows... hadn't locked up in a day or two... heh.

(Comment on this)

Wednesday, July 5th, 2000

11:06 pm Damn, I'm being a good boy... I HATE documenting shit.

(Comment on this)

10:09 pm Oh man... just reminded that I have to be at my grandma's house at 10:30 tomorrow morning to take her to the oral surgeon. Heh. Suck.

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

9:34 pm Watched some TV for the first time in a while. Called Nic. Everything's cool for friday. Working now. Hrm. Does the "f" in "friday" need to be capitalized?

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

9:04 pm Shoot... left AIM on AGAIN. Oops.

(Comment on this)

3:41 pm ...after several naps.

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(Comment on this)

3:41 pm Finally got a shower...

(Comment on this)

12:09 pm Jon woke me up at the ungodly hour of 11:00. We played with Atari a bit... now watching Fight Club DVD parts...

(Comment on this)

3:37 am Time to stop screwing around and go to sleep... I should go to sleep earlier... I'm a dumbass... who's going to take some initiative and force me to go to sleep early???

(Comment on this)

12:25 am Damn, all I have to do is mention that I am having some Linux trouble and everyone wants to help me. Heh.

(Comment on this)

12:21 am Home. Fun day. Hung out with family at Cindy's.. then met Zane, Danielle, Tyler, and Jill and went to Applebee's then saw Gone in 60 Seconds... then went to UDF... THEN watched fireworks. Heh.

(Comment on this)

Tuesday, July 4th, 2000

1:53 pm Zane... "fun fun fun" didn't mean I wasn't excited. Don't get sad. ;-)

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

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The role of electronic commerce in creating virtual tourism destination marketing organisations

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Keywords
Electronic commerce, Co-operative marketing, Internet, Tourism

Abstract
Co-operation is crucial to the successful marketing of tourism destinations, and electronic commerce offers exciting new opportunities for co-operation among tourism suppliers. This article examines the reciprocal linking of Websites to create "virtual" tourism destination organisations, whereby consumers can access information and purchase multiple components of a holiday online. A very simple starting point in the formation of a virtual destination marketing organisation is the linking of individual suppliers' Websites, so that a visitor arriving at one site can click through to complementary sites which contribute to the total destination offer. This paper examines the theoretical and practical benefits of virtual co-operation and reports on a survey, which examines the extent to which electronic commerce is superseding or complementing traditional hierarchical marketing organisations. Based on a sample of tourism suppliers' Websites in Northern Ireland, very little co-operation was observed. The reasons for this are discussed and recommendations made for future co-operation.

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Introduction

A tourism destination typically comprises numerous autonomous suppliers, yet consumers make purchase and repurchase decisions based on the totality of the experience available at a destination (Williams and Palmer, 1999). There are now many studies which have shown the methods by which co-operation between suppliers can add value to the tourism destination product (Leiper, 1996; Palmer and Bejou, 1995; Heath and Wall, 1991). Co-operative promotion of tourism destinations has conventionally focused on the production of joint publicity brochures, often distributed through shared stands at exhibitions. The development of electronic commerce now offers new opportunities for collaboratively marketing tourism destinations. There is the potential to create "virtual co-operation", whereby potential tourists can browse through Websites of individual facilities at a destination and develop a coherent picture of the destination experience on offer. The creative linking of Websites facilitates the profiling of enquiries in a way that allows potential tourists to develop their own package of experiences from a visit to a destination.

This paper aims to add to our understanding of electronic commerce as a medium for developing co-operation between organisations that make up a tourism destination. Specifically, the research examines the role of electronic commerce in creating "virtual tourism destinations" over the Internet.

Co-operation and tourism destination marketing

The success of a tourism destination product typically depends on a network of independent and inter-dependent organisations (Gartrell, 1991; Kotler *et al.*, 1996). A frequently used approach to the study of inter-organisational relationships is based on network analysis (Achrol, 1991; Quinn, 1992). The network rationale is that a single organisation is unable or unwilling to cope with the complexity and risks of its environment and similarly unable or unwilling to meet the skill and resource demands essential for competing in the global market (Cravens *et al.*, 1993). Members of a network are not completely dependent on each other, as they remain independent along certain dimensions of the relationship. Each partner contributes some part of its core competence that others need, but which it does not have available internally. The 1990s saw growing interest in a new form of organisation often referred to as the virtual organisation (Davidow and Malone, 1992). The virtual organisation in this context refers to a network of independent companies, suppliers, customers, even erstwhile rivals linked by information technology to share skills, cost, and access to one another's markets. A characteristic is that they may have no central office or internal hierarchy (Byrne, 1993).

Electronic commerce has facilitated the development of virtual organisations. Hale and Whitlam (1997) define as "virtual" any organisation that is continually evolving, redefining, and reinventing itself for practical business purposes. The virtual organisation is characterised by the lack of a physical presence and recognisable hierarchies. The aim of such organisations is to deliver services through structures and processes that are fast, flexible, and flat. Virtual organisations are more flexible and responsive than traditional organisational structures because of "computer-mediated communication" (Hoffman and Novak, 1995; Barnatt, 1997). They can allow small businesses to collaborate with minimal bureaucracy and can create value cost

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effectively. The virtual organisation has particular relevance to individual businesses within the hospitality and tourism industry – particularly within the small business sector whose limited resources require the outsourcing of many specialist functions. By drawing together essentially freelance individuals, virtual organisations can benefit from an inherent responsiveness to change in the business environment (Barnatt, 1997). Virtual organisations can be focused solely around the processing of information into knowledge and consequently into expertise without having a dedicated physical infrastructure. There are many variants of virtual organisation, which capitalise on the prominence of knowledge and information as key inputs and outputs. Owing to the intangibility of the resources they process, there is no necessity for many virtual organisations to exhibit or support a definite physical architecture nor a clear bureaucracy; a tight employment structure, nor a dedicated resource base which characterise conventional organisational structures. In this paper, the term virtual organisation describes the network of independent companies that constitute and market a tourist destination. The outcome of this co-operation is the composite tourism destination product which consumers experience. Recent growth in accessibility to information technology has fuelled the development of virtual tourism destination organisations, with particularly rapid growth in travel-related sites (Kate, 1998, *Marketing*, 1999).

Electronic marketing of tourism destinations

Tourism-related services have emerged as a leading product category to be promoted and distributed to consumer markets through the Internet (Connolly *et al.*, 1998; Sussman and Baker, 1996; Archdale *et al.*, 1992; Millman, 1998; Underwood, 1996). The nature of consumers' search activity, involving multiple choice of suppliers and comparison of facilities, prices and availability is facilitated by the search capabilities of the Internet. Increasingly, information intermediaries are able to profile consumers and provide a selection that is based on their needs.

Electronic commerce offers great flexibility for tourism suppliers operating in volatile markets. The promotional message can be changed much more quickly than is the case where the need to print documents leads to long lead times between a policy decision being made and the implementation of that decision. Electronic commerce is very good at handling clearance of perishable capacity close to the time of use and for managing yields effectively (Wolff, 1997; Connolly *et al.*, 1998). Customers benefit from such channels by gaining immediate gratification of their requests, greater choice, multi-sensory, accurate and up-to-date information and an easy to use interface (Pollock, 1996). Similarly, the costs of obtaining information are reduced for customers and travel agents and the wide diversity of information can be represented on one terminal, which further reduces the information search costs for potential tourists (Bakos, 1991).

Many tourism destination marketing organisations have developed Websites with varying levels of interactivity. An interactive Website provides a good opportunity for the multiple suppliers involved in a tourism destination to uniquely fashion together the specific components of a destination offer which are sought by individual visitors.

A crucial role is played by methods of guiding individuals through the enormous range of destination options available. In this sense the Internet is no different to traditional marketing in that consumers seek to simplify their choice by using a combination of intermediaries, trusted brand names and established business relationships. Within the tourism sector, the role of tour operators has simplified the purchase process of tourism buyers by pre-packaging the elements of a vacation that would otherwise be difficult to assemble individually. The use of trusted brand name tour operators and the emergence of branded virtual intermediaries has reduced the riskiness of a purchase. Tourist destinations can benefit from the Internet by developing a coherent position in the marketplace; increasing their market share by getting closer to customers (actual and potential); and subsequently by providing greater customer satisfaction (Sussmann and Baker, 1996). The role of information integration and brokerage is especially applicable to destination marketing organisations (state tourism departments, national tourism offices, and city convention and visitor bureaux) as they rarely have a product of their own to sell. Instead, their role is to match buyers with sellers, demand with supply and producers with consumers by positioning and promoting a place as a tourism destination brand (Pollock, 1995).

The issue of simplifying consumers' choice process raises two important concerns in the adaptation of electronic commerce. First, the

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ability of electronic commerce to learn about the needs of individual consumers, and secondly the ability of individual tourism suppliers to link together their Websites to present a complete "virtual" tourism experience which is appropriate to individuals' needs. Many tourism destination marketing groups have achieved success in representing diverse business interests through the media of exhibitions, advertising and joint promotional brochures (Chetwynd, 1999). A new challenge for tourism groups is to develop co-operation in a way that is meaningful for electronic commerce through business-led strategies. Hotlinks out of a company's site have the potential to take potential business away from a company, but there can be no guarantee that such a hotlink will be reciprocated by other organisations. While self-interest may initiate many marketing exchange relationships, reciprocity is instrumental in sustaining those relationships (Bagozzi, 1995; Becker, 1990). Reciprocation can also be considered in terms of members' ability and willingness to adapt their basic business procedures to suit the needs of their partners (Campbell, 1985; Jackson, 1985).

Tourism destinations present an ideal scenario for the development of virtual organisations, linked together by information technology. It should be possible for all businesses within a tourist destination to link their Websites so that a visitor to one site would easily be able to find out about related facilities at other companies' Websites. Despite the potential for creating virtual destinations out of the component organisations, the marketing of many tourist destinations appears to remain dominated by the central role of a hierarchical tourist board. This study seeks to test the following proposition:

P. The marketing of tourism destinations through the Internet supports a virtual organisation structure, rather than a hierarchical one.

Methodology

The proposition was tested by direct observation of all known tourism-related Websites offered by companies in a specified area. The destination and its associated Websites defined a system, which comprised endogenous and exogenous Websites. Endogenous Websites comprised all of those sites operated by businesses based within a selected geographical study area. These were subdivided into stand-alone organisational sites and regional/consortia sites. Exogenous sites comprised all other sites in the rest of the world, some of which would have hyperlinks into the sample of endogenous sites.

The system chosen for this study comprised the Greater Belfast area in Northern Ireland. Numerous public and private sector organisations have been actively seeking to promote inward tourism to Belfast, which has grown since the ending of a period of civil disturbances. The area is actively promoted as a tourism destination on the strength of its heritage, festivals, sporting activities and links with expatriates. Within this system, two Websites were defined as regional sites, administered by government agencies (Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Belfast City Council). The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) has a statutory responsibility for promoting the province to overseas visitors, and works with a number of regional tourism offices at achieving this. The study area was defined as the area within a 20-mile radius of the centre of Belfast.

It is important to define a link. This research identifies a link as a hypertext link within a unique resource locator (URL) that leads to a separate and independent page that is maintained by that other individual business. It was found that the regional Websites did not have a hypertext link *per se* to other individual businesses. Rather, the regional Website only allowed the surfer to locate another page within the site that related to a specific enquiry. In short, the regional Websites did not provide a hypertext link into another independent URL that was operated and maintained solely by the business in question. Thus, in order to examine the proposition it was necessary to assess the extent to which constituents of a tourism destination were using hypertext links within their own pages in the promotion of that area. The key of the research therefore was to examine those independent businesses with URLs and follow all (if any) links out of that site to see where they led to. In turn, hypertext links that led to another URL were examined to see if the link was reciprocated. When we talk about Websites, we refer to organisations with their own independent URL. This means that the NITB and Belfast City Council Websites were only regarded as two separate Websites.

A schematic diagram of the boundaries and linkages of the study is shown in Figure 1.

Having identified constituents of the destination, the first task was to enumerate the population of Websites within the system

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that had their own URL. This was initially undertaken using the Yahoo! search engine with at first general keywords followed by an advanced search for specific known business names. This was supplemented with other sources that gave individual Website addressees, for example company brochures. Finally, all sites found through these methods were inspected and any further sites referred to within them noted. Using these methods of enumeration, the number of Websites within the system was found to be 49. The research ignored search results that listed a constituent under any form of marketing alliance or consortia, as this does not qualify a company as having an independent URL. Many of the individual Websites listed other facilities in their surrounding area, but if no link to a URL was provided for such facilities, such lists were not treated as links for the purpose of this research. To reiterate, the key to proving/disproving the proposition lies with constituents of the tourism product that have an independent URL.

To test the research proposition, all enumerated Websites were examined and the existence of four types of potential links recorded (see Figure 1):

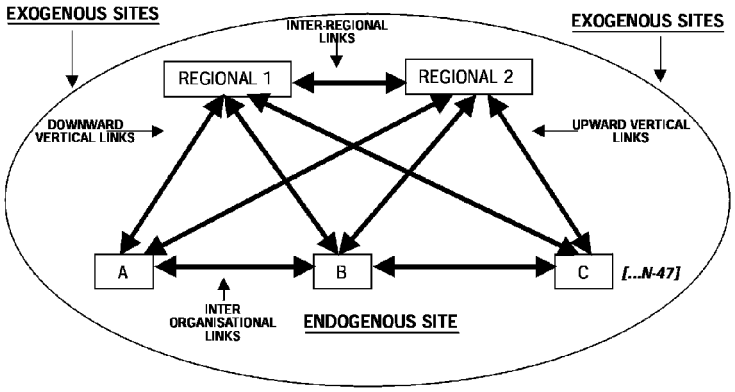
1 downward vertical links from regional Websites to individual organisation Websites;
2 upward vertical links from individual organisation Websites to regional Websites;
3 horizontal links between individual organisations;
4 horizontal links between regional Websites.

In the process of carrying out the research, a matrix of all Websites within the system was developed. This showed each enumerated site as both a destination for a hyperlink and a source for an outward hyperlink. With 49 Websites within the system, this gave a total of 2,401 (49 × 49) possible links between sites. Within the matrix, it was noted whether a hyperlink out of a site to another site within the system was reciprocated. In addition, the practical research was done twice so as to minimise discrepancies and errors in the analyses. It was beyond the scope of this research to examine reciprocation of hyperlinks to endogenous sites that were outside the system.

Analysis

Information from the matrix of origin and destination sites was used to build a model of network relationships (Figure 1). The first point of note was the importance of the two regional Websites. The NITB regional Website had 275 individual pages and provided a high degree of interactivity for users. The Belfast City Council Website had links to 124 individual organisations. A series of questions guided users to individual pages, which were likely to be of greatest interest to them. Because of its interactivity and comprehensiveness, it was a useful tool for creating in users' minds a virtual picture of the facilities available to tourists in Belfast. However, there were no links from either regional Website to individual organisations with their own URL. This implies that once a surfer is logged onto the regional sites he/she does not need a hypertext link to other independent URLs to gain a holistic view of all that is on offer there. Further, the research only found eight tourism constituents that had a link back to

Figure 1
The structure of the network of Websites studied



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either regional Website. Thus, out of 628 potential links from regional Websites and back, only 1.3 per cent were reciprocated. In addition, out of 47 individual constituents that had an independent URL, only eight (8.5 per cent) had a reciprocated link to either regional Website. This is a very significant finding and it appears that there is still a hierarchical organisational structure dominating the marketing of tourism destinations in the study area. This is potentially important for the promotion of Belfast as a holistic tourism experience, because it cannot be assumed that Internet users would arrive within the system via the regional Websites. Indeed, in compiling the list of sites within the system using the keywords noted in the methodology section, a direct link to the NITB regional site was never listed above number 180 in the Yahoo! listing of matching sites. Ironically, the majority of searches undertaken in Yahoo! using various keywords listed the Belfast City Council Website address as a search result more often than it promoted the use of the NITB Website. The implication is that a user arriving at the site of a tourism constituent (for example through that company's own publicity) would have difficulty obtaining the broader perspective of tourism opportunities available at the regional Websites.

Of the 47 individual businesses that had their own Websites, 17 had links to other organisations' Websites within the system. Out of these 17 links, 11 of them were reciprocated representing 68.75 per cent of them. This must be considered a very low level of linkage, when it is remembered that there are 2,209 (47 × 47) possible linkages between individual organisations. Moreover, of these potential links, only 11 (or 0.5 per cent) were actually found to be reciprocated. Linkages between individual organisations are potentially a very useful facility, because a user arriving at a site can quickly identify complimentary facilities; for example, a hotel may provide hyperlinks to nearby golf courses, restaurants and night clubs. This is particularly important where a user has arrived at the site directly from outside the system, rather than via one of the regional Websites.

No reciprocation was found between the two regional Websites. This is quite surprising considering that the organisations they represent are similar in their aims and have publicly stated their desire to co-operate with each other. Table I provides a summary of linkages between sites within the system studied and gives disappointing evidence of reciprocity between individual constituent's having an independent URL.

Discussion/management implications

Electronic commerce is increasingly allowing organisations to join together in virtual communities to develop networks which add to the collective value of members' output, and in doing so, the literature has suggested that flatter and more open organisation structures may be more appropriate.

This research has questioned the extent of virtual organisation in an area where the form could be most expected to succeed. There is disappointing evidence so far of use of Websites for co-operative tourism destination marketing in the study area. This is particularly significant in the horizontal dimension of Figure 1 where only 11 of 2,209 possible links (0.5 per cent of the total) have reciprocated hypertext links between. What is most disappointing is that if a potential tourist "lands" on an individual Website that is not reciprocated or linked to surrounding amenities, the opportunity for that particular surfer to gain a holistic view of the totality of experiences available in that destination is lost.

The structure of the system of Websites studied indicated a dominant role played by the two regional Websites, especially the longer-established site operated by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. The NITB site provided a comprehensive top-down facility for tourism businesses within the study area, but the level of reciprocated linkages back to the site was very low. The regional Website adopts a profiling technique and lists attractions, accommodation, restaurants, and public houses. An additional link then provides information on "what you can do around here", and lists fishing, rent-a-car, bird-watching, horseback riding, golf, sailing, adventures on foot, and courses available. The surfer is given the opportunity to avail of a holiday planner by administering a login name and password at the beginning of the search. If a particular service or amenity is of interest it may be added to the itinerary which is automatically produced on request. An important implication is that once the surfer has entered this site he/she has no need to undertake an additional search for other Websites relating to the area.

The result of the analysis of upward vertical linkages is surprising considering that the impact of individual Websites for

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Table I
Analysis of hyperlinks within the system

Type of link	A Number of potential links	B Actual links found	C Number of actual links reciprocated	C/A Percentage of potential links found reciprocated	C/B Percentage of actual links reciprocated
Downward vertical	328 x 2 = 656	399	8	1.3	2.0
Upward vertical	46 x 2 = 94	8	8	8.5	100.0
Horizontal inter-organisational	47 x 47 = 2,209	17	11	0.5	64.75
Horizontal inter-regional	1	0	0	0	0

organisations may be of little use for potential tourists wishing to gain an holistic impression of all that is on offer there. Therefore, if an Internet user landed on the site of a particular tourism constituent from outside the system studied, they would most likely not be linked back to either the Belfast City Council or Northern Ireland Tourist Board Websites. From initial searches using Yahoo!, the official Northern Ireland Tourist Board Website and the Belfast City Council Website were not immediately apparent. There was no direct link to either regional Website in the top ten. However, they could be accessed from indirect channels, which were not primarily related to hospitality and tourism.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Belfast City Council play a key role in promoting tourism in Belfast. In both regional Websites there is a top-down approach for promoting individual businesses. Tourism marketing is therefore driven by a central organisation in which enquiries may be made, accommodation reserved, and information gathered on particular amenities, although the use of electronic commerce for reservations is still in its infancy (Gulliver is thought to provide the infrastructure to links all constituents). This may create less initiative for a potential tourist to search for individual Websites pertaining to facilities in the same area, especially where direct reservations cannot be made online. Nevertheless, this ease of information retrieval in turn promotes the existence of central organisations to promote tourism as a whole. *Thus, the very existence of virtual tourism organisations as an aid to promote tourism is put into question.* In light of the technological development in marketing communication there is a notable lack of co-operative initiatives in the marketing of destinations between individual businesses using the methods of electronic commerce.

Recommendations

This study has provided disappointing evidence so far in the use of Websites for co-operative tourism destination marketing. The research indicates a number of action points worthy of consideration:

1 More onus should be put on the constituent or independent suppliers of tourism to promote a destination more rigorously using the opportunities presented by new media. Government incentives may facilitate this move, but evidence from this study appears to suggest that policy so far has mainly served to emphasise the centralising tendency of government agencies.
2 There is a role for third party initiatives to promote tourism destinations. Local suppliers of digital technology could spur the initiative in the promotion of tourism destinations using virtual organisations. This is turn promotes the third party, and indeed if promotion of the initiative is effective, will lead to increased profit for the organisation as well as increased tourism activity throughout the region.
3 There needs to be an awareness campaign in tourist areas to emphasise the benefits to individual businesses of co-operative marketing. While there is now a widespread acceptance of the value of co-operatively produced print media, this must be extended with the encouragement and development of Websites. These should be comprehensive, user-friendly and have hypertext links that are reciprocated with all facilities available in that area. Conventional media is expensive and is becoming less cost effective. Co-operative marketing is much more cost effective and can stimulate greater travel urges. It is imperative to detail basic information such as tariffs and opening times where applicable and provide the surfer with a direct telephone number for enquiries and reservations.

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4 Initially, specific segments should be targeted and the positioning in these segments of conventional and/or electronic media is important. The businessperson is leading the way in creating packages over the Web. Hence the need for specificity in the design of Websites and the degree of reciprocity inherent in such initiatives. Placement of these sites is also important in search engines, as consumers are more likely to interact with a site that is automatically displayed in a search result. Conventional media must actively promote these sites in turn through trade exhibitions in the first instance so as to increase its familiarity to potential tourists.

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Social Networking Site For Self Portfolio

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Abstract

Online social networking concept is a global phenomenon and there are millions of sites which help in being connected with friends and family. This project focuses on creating self-portfolios for the users which makes the users engaging with their skills. The users follow the other users to interact and communicate with them. Users can encourage the other user's blogs and videos by clicking the hit button.The functionality of this site is designed to focus on both professional as well as academics. Each user is given a dashboard for uploading videos and writing blogs.

Keywords: *Network Visualization Social network analysis Information categorization Information analysis*

1. Introduction

Since their introduction, social network sites (SNSs) such as MySpace, Facebook, Cyworld, and Bebo have attracted millions of users, many of whom have integrated these sites into their daily practices. As of this writing, there are hundreds of SNSs, with various technological affordances,supporting a wide range of interests and practices. While their key technological features are fairly consistent, the cultures that emerge around SNSs are varied. Most sites support the maintenance of pre-existing social networks, but others help strangers connect based on shared interests, political views, or activities. Some sites cater to diverse audiences, while others attract people based on common language or shared racial, sexual, religious, or nationality-based identities. Sites also

vary in the extent to which they incorporate new information and communication tools, such as mobile connectivity, blogging, and photo/video-sharing.

Scholars from disparate fields have examined SNSs in order to understand the practices, implications, culture, and meaning of the sites, as well as users' engagement with them. This special theme section of the Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication brings together aunique collectionof articles that analyze a wide spectrum of social network sites using various methodological techniques, theoretical traditions, and analytic approaches. By collecting these articles in this issue, our goal is to showcase some of the interdisciplinary scholarship around these sites[7].

The purpose of this introduction is to provide a conceptual, historical, and scholarly context for the articles in this collection. We begin by defining what constitutes a social network site and then present one perspective on the historical development of SNSs, drawing from personal interviews and public accounts of sites and their changes over time. Following this, we review recent scholarship on SNSs and attempt to contextualize and highlight key works. We conclude with a description of the articles included in this special section and suggestions for future research.

2. Portfolio

Rick Stiggins (1994) defines a portfolio as a collection of student work that demonstrates achievement or improvement. The material to be collected and the story to betold can vary greatly as a function of the assessment context.

The Northwest Evaluation Association offers a similar definition: A purposeful collection of student work that illustrates efforts, progress, and achievement in one or moreareas [over time]. The collection must include: student participation in selecting contents, the criteria forselection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection.

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3. Web service

A **Web service** is a method of communication between two electronic devices over the World Wide Web. A **Web service** is a software function provided at a network address over the web or the cloud, it is a service that is "always on" as in the concept of utility computing [3].

3.1 Motivation of research problem

1. What are the benefits of developing self-portfolios in social networking site?
2. What are the benefits of uploading certificates in our profile?
3. What are the benefits of using chat rooms in our site?

4. Social Network Sites

We define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.

While we use the term "social network site" to describe this phenomenon, the term "social networking sites" also appears in public discourse, and the two terms are often used interchangeably. We chose not to employ the term "networking" for two reasons: emphasis and scope. "Networking" emphasizes relationship initiation, often between strangers. While networking is possible on these sites, it is not the primary practice on many of them, nor is it what differentiates them from other forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC) [5].

What makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks. This can result in connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal, and these meetings are frequently between "latent ties" (Haythornthwaite, 2005) who share some offline connection. On many of the large SNSs, participants are not necessarily "networking" or looking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network. To emphasize this articulated social network as a critical organizing feature of these sites, we label them "social network sites."

4.1 A History of Social Network Sites The Early Years

According to the definition above, the first recognizable social network site launched in 1997. SixDegrees.com allowed users to create profiles, list their Friends and, beginning in 1998, surf the Friends lists. Each of these features existed in some form before SixDegrees, of course. Profiles existed on most major dating sites and manycommunity sites. AIM and ICQ buddy lists supported lists of Friends, although those Friends were not visible to others. Classmates.com allowed people to affiliate with their high school or college and surf the network for others who were also affiliated, but users could not create profiles or list Friends until years later. SixDegrees was the first to combine these features.

SixDegrees promoted itself as a tool to help people connect with and send messages to others. While SixDegrees attracted millions of users, it failed to become a sustainable business and, in 2000, the service closed. Looking back, its founder believes that SixDegrees was simply ahead of its time (A. Weinreich, personal communication, July 11, 2007). While people were already flocking to the Internet, most did not have extended networks of friends who were online. Early adopters complained that there was little to do after accepting Friend requests, and most users were not interested in meeting strangers[10].

From 1997 to 2001, a number of community tools began supporting various combinations of profiles and publicly articulated Friends. AsianAvenue, BlackPlanet, and MiGente allowed users to create personal, professional, and dating profiles—users could identify Friends on their personal profiles without seeking approval for those connections (O. Wasow, personal communication, August 16, 2007). Likewise, shortly after its launch in 1999, LiveJournal listed one-directional connections on user pages. LiveJournal's creator suspects that he fashioned these Friends after instant messaging

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buddy lists (B. Fitzpatrick, personal communication, June 15, 2007)—on LiveJournal, people mark others as Friends to follow their journals and manage privacy settings. The Korean virtual worlds site Cyworld was started in 1999 and added SNS features in 2001, independent of these other sites (see Kim & Yun, this issue). Likewise, when the Swedish web community LunarStorm refashioned itself as an SNS in 2000, it contained Friends lists, guestbooks, and diary pages (D. Skog, personal communication, September 24, 2007).

The next wave of SNSs began when Ryze.com was launched in 2001 to help people leverage their business networks. Ryze's founder reports that he first introduced the site to his friends—primarily members of the San Francisco business and technology community, including the entrepreneurs and investors behind many future SNSs (A. Scott, personal communication, June 14, 2007). In particular, the people behind Ryze, Tribe.net, LinkedIn, and Friendster were tightly entwined personally and professionally. They believed that they could support each other without competing (Festa, 2003). In the end, Ryze never acquired mass popularity, Tribe.net grew to attract a passionate niche user base, LinkedIn became a powerful business service, and Friendster became the most significant, if only as "one of the biggest disappointments in Internet history" (Chafkin, 2007, p. 1)[12].

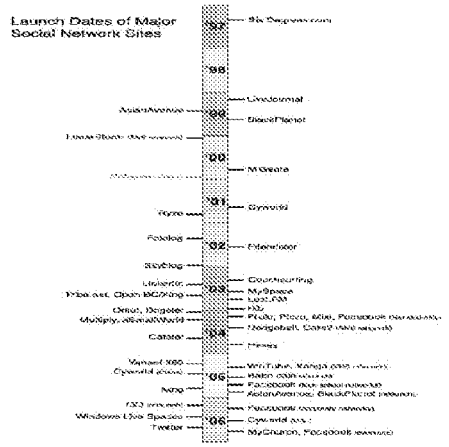


Figure 1. Timeline of the launch dates of many major SNSs and dates when community sites re-launched with SNS features. Like any brief history of a major phenomenon, ours is necessarily incomplete. In the following section we discuss Friendster, MySpace, and Facebook, three key SNSs that shaped the business, cultural, and research landscape.

4.2 Networks and Network Structure

Social network sites also provide rich sources of naturalistic behavioral data. Profile and linkage data from SNSs can be gathered either through the use of automated collection techniques or through datasets provided directly from the company, enabling network analysis researchers to explore large-scale patterns of friending, usage, and other visible indicators (Hogan, in press), and continuing an analysis trend that started with examinations of blogs and other websites [12]. For instance, Golder, Wilkinson, and Huberman (2007) examined an anonymized dataset consisting of 362 million messages exchanged by over four million Facebook users for insight into Friending and messaging activities. Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfield (2007) explored the relationship between profile elements and number of Facebook friends, finding that profile fields that reduce transaction costs and are harder to falsify are most likely to be associated with larger number of friendship links. These kinds of data also lend themselves well to analysis through network visualization (Adamic, Büyükkökten, & Adar, 2003; Heer&boyd, 2005; Paolillo& Wright, 2005).

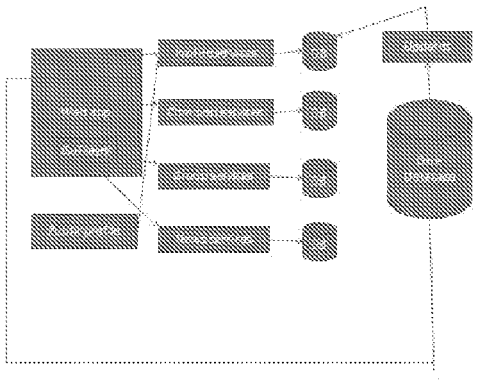
5. Research objective

1. The most important benefit of developing self-portfolio in social networking site is solving storage problem associated with traditional paper based portfolios,additionally instructors can easily comment on learners work by tap into the portfolio,also anyone in the world can be granted access to the portfolio and students can have perfect control on what artifacts can be presented and who can see them.

2. The important benefit of uploading certificates in our profile is solving the problem of taking the traditional paper based certificates for an interview; attending an online examination these certificates in our profile can be used.

3. Chat rooms are available for the users who wants to interact and communicate with the professionals in any domain the user is interested discuss about the ideas, ask solutions about the problems.

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6. Conclusion

Portfolio can facilitate long-life, meaningful learning. Besides the students developed more self-monitoring and self-regulation and self-assessment by producing more reflective works. In the recent mode of instruction the educators can keep in touch with learners and provide editing fast online feedback as a guide and simulator and facilitator rather than proving the correct answer. Taking participants reflections into consideration the teacher can promote learners responsibility and feeling of ownership toward their portfolio. Consequently it would support students to use portfolio as a tool in order to promote their learning process.

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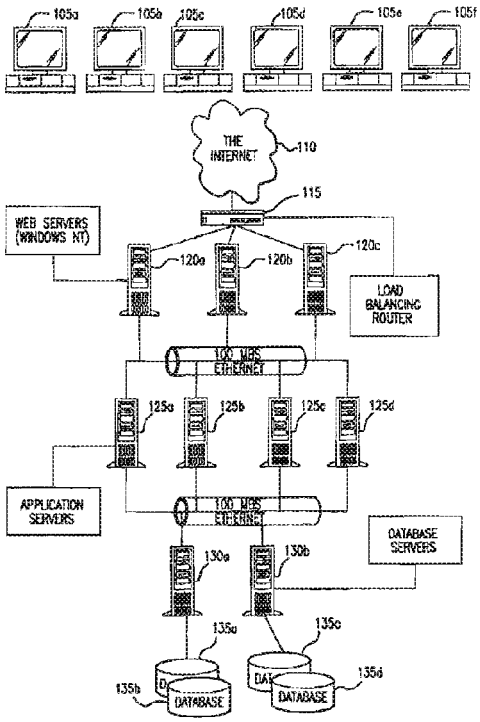
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(57) Abstract

The present invention is directed to an e–commerce outsourcing system and method that provides hosts (105d–f) with transparent, context sensitive e–commerce supported pages over the Internet (110). The look and feel of a target host (105f) is captured for future use (135a–d). The look and feel is captured by receiving the identification of an example page on the target host (105f), retrieving the page (120a–c), identifying the look and feel elements of the identified page (125a–d) and storing the identified elements (135a–d). The host (105f) is provided with links correlating the host with a link for inclusion within a page on the host website for serving to a visitor computer (105a–c), wherein the provided link correlates the host website with a selected commerce object contextually related to material in the page. The commerce object can be a product, a product category or a dynamic selection indicator. Upon activation of the product link, the visitor computer (105a–c) is served with an e–commerce support page.



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AFFILIATE COMMERCE SYSTEM AND METHOD

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED PATENT APPLICATION

This application claims the benefit, pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §119(e), of applicants' provisional U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 60/100,697, filed September 17, 1998, entitled "AFFILIATE COMMERCE SYSTEM AND METHOD".

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

1. FIELD OF INVENTION

The invention relates to a system and method supporting commerce syndication. More specifically, the invention relates to a system and method for computer based information providers to receive outsourced electronic commerce facilities in a context sensitive, transparent manner.

2. DESCRIPTION OF PRIOR ART

The World Wide Web began as a simple interface to the Internet using HTML (hypertext markup language) as a means of linking documents together. This allowed a researcher, for example, to embed "active" references in his or her documents that, if selected, would enable the reader to review the source of the reference first-hand. Programmers quickly capitalized on this technology, creating "web sites" which reflected less staid purposes, laying the groundwork for the literal "web" of content and interactive applications that exists today. In the early stages, website programmers increased visitor traffic by placing "links" within their websites to other websites, usually related in content or function, in exchange for a reciprocal link. Additionally, directories of websites, such as Yahoo, and search engines, such as WebCrawler, began to appear in an attempt to organize the content of the Internet so that its users could create "custom links pages" related to specific topics.

In these early days, the Web was mostly trafficked by programmers and "techies," and a commune-type "share and share alike" mindset prevailed. As a result, people were happy to litter their sites with links, knowing that, odds were, others would do the same for them and the traffic gain/loss would probably balance out. So, despite the fact that by including and promoting a "links" page, website operators were effectively encouraging people to leave their website, link sharing developed into a standard practice.

Then, entrepreneurs and other business-oriented individuals came along and introduced capitalism to the Internet. Profit-oriented website operators began to seek visitors wherever they could find them, and opportunistic owners of popular sites began to realize that they had an increasingly scarce resource – visitors. Such website owners began to sell the links they had previously offered for free in the form of paid advertisements. Search engines and directories became increasingly popular for two main reasons. First, the number of websites was growing astronomically, so it was becoming harder for users to find what they wanted. Second, since reciprocal links were either going away or were being replaced by links exclusively to non-competing websites, search engines and directories were the only way to find multiple resources for a single topic.

Amid frantic efforts on the part of corporate websites to get noticed, the sale of banner ads blossomed into a large industry called Internet advertising. Thousands of websites created space for banner ads and called the space "inventory." At first, they priced ads as a print ad might be priced: by CPM, or cost per thousand "impressions" each ad made on website visitors. Over time this pricing model gave way to arrangements more favorable to advertisers such as Cost Per Click-through and Cost Per Inquiry (meaning the advertiser only needs to pay when a visitor sees a banner ad and clicks on it and completes an information request form on the advertiser's site).

Some of the most successful Internet commerce websites, led by online bookseller Amazon.com, have begun to take an even more results-driven approach to the purchase of banner ads. They have offered to pay only for ads that, when clicked, result in a product sale. To provide a stronger incentive than a simple banner ad, these companies let third-party website owners list a subset of their goods (e.g., 10 of Amazon.com's millions of books, selected by the website owner) and promote them as they choose within their websites. Initiatives such as these have come to be described as "affiliate programs", "associate programs" or "commission based advertising programs".

The benefits of affiliate programs are significant. To the website owner, they constitute revenue-generating web content without requiring an investment in product inventory or additional infrastructure. They also create new revenues without

necessarily reducing the website's available ad inventory. However, the greater benefit almost always accrues not to the affiliate, but to Amazon.com and other online stores. Not only do these sites benefit from the marketing resources of the affiliate operators, they are also able to lure the visitor traffic away from the affiliate. Once a visitor clicks on an affiliate ad and enters an online store, that visitor has left the affiliate's site and is gone. At best, affiliates are able to use "frames" to keep a shell of their own website around the vendor's site, but this is only a marginally effective solution. No alternatives have been able to address a fundamental drawback of the affiliate programs – the loss of the visitor to the vendor. At best, some Internet affiliate sales vendors have begun placing "return to referring website" links on their order confirmation screens, an approach that is largely ineffective. This limitation of an affiliate program restricts participation to less trafficked websites that are unconcerned about losing visitors. Meanwhile, search engines and directories continue to increase in their usefulness and popularity, while banner ads and old-style links continue their rapid loss of effectiveness and popular usage.

The present invention overcomes these limitation of present affiliate commerce systems and provides other benefits as will become clearer to those skilled in the art from the foregoing description.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The affiliate commerce system and method of the present invention represents a new paradigm of co-marketing on the Internet. Not only does the present invention provide its Hosts with the added value and incremental revenues of traditional affiliate programs, but the company also enables Hosts to control the customer experience before, during, and after the purchase transaction. At the same time, Merchants receive the same benefits as with older affiliate programs, i.e., increased marketing potential, incremental sales, and new customer relationships, but without the restrictive limitations of affiliate programs -- the loss of hard-won visitor traffic.

Additionally, the present invention can actually obviate the need for some merchants to invest in their own unique Internet presence. By using the present invention as their primary online sales channel, these Merchants can focus on product

development, production, and order fulfillment and leave the exploration of the Internet to experts. The resulting ongoing cost savings and operational efficiencies magnify the potential benefits of the Internet while reducing the initial costs.

According to the present invention the look and feel of each participating Host is captured and stored. Hosts may include links to selected products or product categories within pages residing on the Hosts' website. Upon actuation of such a link by a visitor of the Host website, a page is presented to the visitor incorporating a replica of the Host's look and feel directed to the sale of the selected products or product categories.

The look and feel of a host is captured and stored by receiving an identification of an example page of a target host. The identified page is retrieved. The look and feel elements of the page are identified, and these elements are stored for future use in generating outsourced transparent pages, pages served by a server other than the host but with the host's look and feel. Such pages give the viewer of the page the impression that she is viewing pages served by the host.

The links included by the host directed to the outsource provider need not be statically linked to a particular product or product category. Such links may direct the outsource provider to dynamically select content to serve within the host's look and feel. This content may be selected based upon a contextual analysis of the page which includes the link. Further, the dynamic content need not be limited to products or product categories but may include any content within the system's data store that is amenable to contextual correlation with content in the page containing the link.

A cost effective, scalable architecture may be used to serve dynamically constructed pages such as those served by the e-commerce outsource provider. This architecture includes three levels: a Web server layer, an application server layer and a database server layer.

The Web server layer provides a front end presentation layer for interacting with end users. This layer may consist of one or more interchangeable low cost server systems. Any request from an end user may be fielded by any system within the layer. The selected system can contact any application server within the application layer to provide processed data for use in responding to the end user request.

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The application layer supports interacting with the database server level to acquire needed data and processing it prior to presentation by the Web server layer. As with the Web server layer, this layer may consist of one or more interchangeable low cost server systems. Any Web server system may submit a request to any application server. The application server includes processing functionality suitable for the types of pages to be dynamically constructed.

The database server layer supports low level management of data used in dynamic page construction. The data store across the one or more low cost server systems is seamlessly viewed as an integrated whole. As a consequence, any database server within the layer can field any request for data submitted by an application server.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 depicts a typical hardware architecture implementing the present invention.

FIG. 2 illustrates the software architecture of the Web server layer.

FIG. 3 illustrates the software architecture of the application server layer.

FIG. 4 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the host signup process.

FIG. 5 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the host account information maintenance process.

FIG. 6 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the host look and fee capture process.

FIG. 7 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the host link generation process.

FIG. 8 is a flow chart of the dynamic content selection and presentation process.

FIG. 9 is a screen capture of a Merchant Manager page in a preferred embodiment.

FIG 10 is a screen capture of a Host Manager page in a preferred embodiment.

FIGs 11 - 18 are screen captures of the page in a preferred embodiment of a look and feel capture process.

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FIG. 19 is a screen capture of a typical e-commerce supported page served in a preferred embodiment.

FIG 20 is a screen capture of a System Manager page in a preferred embodiment.

FIG. 21 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the host view reports process.

FIG. 22 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the shopping process.

FIG. 23 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the merchant account maintenance process.

FIG. 24 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the merchant catalog maintenance process.

FIG. 25 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the merchant view reports process.

FIG. 26 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the merchant view hosts process.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

A preferred embodiment of the invention is now described in detail. Referring to the drawings, like numbers indicate like parts throughout the views. As used in the description herein and throughout the claims that follow, the meaning of "a," "an," and "the" includes plural reference unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. Also, as used in the description herein and throughout the claims that follow, the meaning of "in" includes "in" and "on" unless the context clearly dictates otherwise.

A typical embodiment of the present invention will include a data store including a look and feel description associated with a host website, a communications link to a visitor computer, and a processor. The processor performs the tasks of capturing a look and feel description associated with a host website, storing the captured look and feel description in the data store, providing the host website with a link that link correlates the host website with a commerce object for inclusion within a page on the host website and which, when activated, causes the processor to serve an e-commerce supported page via the communication link with a look and feel

corresponding to the captured look and feel description of the host website associated with the provided link and with content based on the commerce object associated with the provided link. The Internet serves as the communication link to visitor computers.

In a preferred embodiment as exhibited by FIG. 1, the duties of the processor are split among several computer systems **120a - 120c, 125a - 125d, 130a - 130b**. The data store may be implemented through a database system **130a - 130b, 135a - 135d**. The Internet **110** serves as the communication link to visitor computers **105a - 105f**. In this preferred embodiment, the system utilizes multiple inexpensive computer systems at every level of the architecture. Routing between levels will automatically distribute the load amongst the functioning computers. Increasing throughput becomes a matter of adding more computers, not scaling up the existing ones. This arrangement also provides fault tolerance since the failure of one server will not incapacitate the system as long as another server providing the same service is alive. This approach also permits the distribution of servers geographically. A router **115** may also provide further load balancing.

The tasks performed by the processor may utilize a variety of underlying software technology. In a preferred embodiment, the software architecture can be divided into 3 tiers: web server, application-server and database-server. Each tier is comprised of a number of software layers.

Web Server Tier

The Web Server tier accesses application functionality by calling a single "Request" Application Programming Interface (API). The API will take a Document Object Model (DOM) (as specified by W3C in http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-DOM-Level-1, which is expressly incorporated herein by reference in its entirety) object as a parameter and return a DOM object as the response. The request will be relayed to the application server tier where a dispatching method will unpack the request object, inspect it, invoke the desired method, and send back the response object. This approach means that new functionality becomes available as soon as the application server is upgraded. It is not necessary to develop a set of "stubs" that mirror the new API call. This is a major advantage because new functionality in the application tier can be exploited immediately simply by modifying the Active Server Page (ASP)

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scripts. No web server resident Dynamic Link Libraries (DLLs) need to be upgraded so the server does not need to be shut down. The web server tier will typically run on server computers **120a - 120c** having a multitasking operating system such as Windows NT from Microsoft or other suitable operating system software. The Web Server tier contains the following layers as illustrated in FIG. 2:

- Web Server Software **210**. In a preferred embodiment, IIS by Microsoft is the server software. It supports serving side scripting using the VBScript scripting language.
- ASP Scripts **220**. All HTML content is rendered by ASP server scripts. The ASP scripting environment can interact with software modules written to Microsoft's COM specification.
- COM Adapters **230**. A set of COM wrappers provides the bridge between the ASP scripts and other elements of the system. The wrappers provide the necessary data conversions but do not contain any substantial functionality. The wrappers are not application specific.
- API Client Layer **240**. The API Client Layer consists of the very thin "request" API described above. This layer cooperates with the Object Cache layer. For example, before retrieving a catalog from the application layer, this layer may check to see if the requested catalog is already in the object cache.
- Object Cache **250**. The object cache contains the responses to previously submitted requests. All items in the cache are marked with an expiration time that is set at the time they are originally retrieved. The purpose of this layer is to reduce the load on the application tier.
- Remote Procedure Call Client **260**. The Remote Procedure Call Client provides connectivity to the application tier. It also provides request routing. In the event of application server failure, this client will automatically reconnect to a working server. This piece of software is not application dependent. In a preferred embodiment, the DBMS Component Server Client is the Objectstore Component Server Client (OCSC).

In a preferred embodiment, the Web server layer supports the following four Web interface modules. In a preferred embodiment, these modules are encoded with ASP to generate appropriate HTML and Javascript. The four modules are as follows:

1. Merchant Manager

The Merchant Manager is the "Control Center" for Merchants. This module allows the merchant to maintain their products, catalogs, contact information, track orders, process returns, run reports, etc.

A merchant representative must login before performing any system activities. Any valid merchant user will be able to perform all possible actions on the merchant to which it is related. Only registered merchants will have a valid account. An account for a merchant is established when the merchant registers with the system. A merchant representative may initiate registration via a web interface. The signup process must collect basic merchant information, including the information necessary to pay the merchant, and a password, which will be used to create a user account for the merchant. Once the merchant is approved (this may be automatic), the merchant will be sent an email containing a unique user id which can be used to login to the system.

When a representative logs in, she is taken directly to the Merchant Manager as seen in FIG. 9 and assigned a Merchant Session ID (Merchant SID). All pages within the merchant system must retrieve the MerchantSID from the HTTP request and validate it. If the session does not validate, the representative is taken back to the Login screen.

This module contains the following submodules:

- Account Information

A merchant representative will be able to maintain the basic merchant profile, which includes the information needed to pay the merchant, the merchant's password, and the merchant's shipping policy information. FIG. 23 depicts the pages and procedures in a typical merchant account maintenance process. The representative selects to maintain account information **2305** from the Merchant Manager page **2300** leading to the display of the a basic information modification page **2310**. Each modifiable information type could be altered through a designated page available through the basic information

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page **2310**. Each such page could provide functionality to save any changes made to the particular page.

This sub-module allows a merchant to maintain the following types of information:

- Basic information **2310** – name, description, address, logo
- Contacts **2320** – for admin, finance, returns, support, order notification
- Product Defaults **2330** – price labels, unit of weight, display options
- Payment Info **2340** – check or ACH, payee info, bank info
- Shipping Option **2350** – by price, items, weight, other or NA
- Shipping Table **2360** – maintain shipping methods and prices
- Tax Schedule **2370** – set tax rate for states in which taxes are collected. This may be automated in the future.

- Products and Catalogs

Here the merchant can both maintain products and arrange them into catalogs. Example product attributes include:

- name
- description
- attributes - such as size, color, etc.
- price(s) – normal, sale, competitor's and the price can be set or changed by an attribute
- small image – used in most places
- large image – used for zoom-in in shopping

The merchant can also maintain their catalogs and categories. A catalog is the top level category. A merchant can have one or more catalogs. Each catalog will be presented to Hosts as a separate entity. However, it is still tied back to the merchant. The merchant logo can be assigned to the catalog or a different image selected.

A catalog is considered a commerce object. Further, a catalog is populated with product or product category commerce objects. An indicator for

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dynamic selection of a product or product category may also be considered a commerce objects; however, such objects would not appear in a catalog.

Categories are then placed in the catalog(s). Categories can also be placed into other categories. A catalog or category can contain an infinite number of categories but really should be kept to less than 10 at any given level for presentation purposes. The bottom level categories contain products. The product node is actually a pointer to the product in the inventory table. This allows for a product to be placed into multiple categories.

A catalog, category or a product can be set to be inactive. If it is set as inactive, it will not be available to the hosts to browse or sell. It will also not be available to customers in the shopping area. If a catalog or category is set as inactive, then every item beneath it (categories or products) is also inactive.

A product also has a flag to indicate it is out of stock. When a product is no longer going to be sold by the merchant, it should be set to inactive. If the product is simply out of stock, thus temporarily unavailable, the out of stock flag should be used.

If a host has an existing link that points to an inactive or out of stock product or an inactive catalog or category, the customer will be taken to the first level above that is active. For example, if a customer clicks on a Link that points to coffee pot A, and coffee pot A has been set to inactive, the shopping page will display the entire coffee pot category (all the active coffee pots). If the coffee pot category was set to inactive, then the shopping page would go to the next level up (such as Kitchen Appliances). In this case the shopper will be given a message indicating the selected product or category is not available. If a host has a link associated with a dynamic selection indicator commerce object, the triggering of such a link will cause the dynamic selection of a product or product category.

FIG. 24 depicts pages and procedures used in a merchant catalog and product maintenance process. When a merchant representative logs into the system, she is presented with the merchant manager page **2300**. From this page, she may choose to proceed to the edit products and catalogs page **2400**. On this

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page, she may elect to search for a product through entering criteria **2405**. She may elect to preview a particular product **2410** and, from the preview, view additional information associated with the particular product **2415**.

From the edit products and catalogs page **2400**, she may also choose to edit a particular product **2420** or edit by catalog or category **2442**. In editing a particular product **2420**, she may elect to save the information associated with the product **2422**, select a current attribute to edit **2424** leading to the attribute edit page **2430** or create a new attribute associated with the product **2426**. An attribute includes a collection of options such as sizes or colors. If she selects to add a new attribute **2426**, a new attribute creation page is presented **2428**. Upon creation of the new attribute, the new attribute is saved, and the representative proceeds to the attribute edit page **2430**. From this page, she may choose to save or cancel the current attribute edit **2435**.

If the representative chooses to edit by catalog or category **2442**, she is presented a page allowing selection of catalogs or categories **2440** through navigating the catalog/category hierarchies **2444**. Once a particular catalog or category is identified, she may edit it via a catalog/category edit page **2450**. After editing, the alterations are saved **2455** returning her to the catalog or category selection page **2440**.

- Reports

A merchant representative may request on-demand reports. Such reports include an account statement that details all payments to the merchant, and statistics about catalog visits and sales. Statistics can be correlated to hosts, links, products and time periods.

As illustrated in FIG. 25, a merchant representative begins at the Merchant Manager page **2300**. She selects the view reports option **2505** to view the report menu page **2510**. From the reports menu page **2510**, she may enter criteria **2514**, **2518** leading respectively to a revenue summary page **2520** or a monthly statement page **2530**. From the monthly statement page **2530**, she may change criteria **2535** to view a revised monthly statement **2530** or return to the report menu **2510**. From the revenue summary page **2520**, she may select a

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specific item **2525** for receiving a detailed revenue page **2550**, alter the criteria **2527** to receive a revised revenue summary **2520**, or return to the reports menu page **2510**. From the detailed revenue page **2550**, she may return to the revenue summary page **2520**.

The following reports are available for the merchants to track their results:

- Revenue Summary by Month

  This report provides sales and traffic information summarized by month. Data includes number of sessions, number of orders, gross and net sales, etc. Summarizes at the month level and allows 'Drill Down' to daily information.

- Revenue Summary by Host

  This report provides sales and traffic information summarized by host. Data includes number of sessions, number of orders, gross and net sales, etc.

- Revenue Summary by Product

  This report provides sales and traffic information summarized by Product. Data includes number of sessions, quantity in shopping cart and gross order amount.

All reports can be run as quick reports (this month, last month, this year, last year, all sales) or by inputting a specific date range.

- Order Tracking

A merchant representative can access a web interface that allows her to report the status of orders. This includes: reporting when the order was shipped, along with tracking information, and the status of all returned items.

The order tracking sub-module allows the merchant to manage all areas of an order. An order can have the following status:

- new – the order has been received and credit card information validated
- pending – the merchant has acknowledged the order, it is waiting to be shipped

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- shipped – the merchant has shipped the order

An order can be shipped in multiple shipments. The merchant is credited for sales on shipped items.

The customer may also return part of an order or the entire order. The customer will obtain an RMA number (see the Shopping sub-module). All the merchant needs to do is acknowledge they have received the product back from the customer.

- Review Hosts

The Merchant Manager also allows the merchant to review which hosts have built links to that merchant's products. The merchant can also view the host web page containing such links.

A merchant representative will be able to review the list of hosts with which the merchant has a relationship. The merchant will have access to some basic information about the host, including at least one of the host's links, so that the host's look and feel can be evaluated.

In a preferred embodiment, a representative may review hosts through pages and procedures as depicted in FIG. 26. She begins at the Merchant Manager page **2300**. She selects the review hosts option to view the merchant-host relationship page **2600**. From this page, she may elect to view one of her products in the host's look and feel **2610** or view a list of links with the selected host that are directed to her commerce objects **2620**.

Automated interfaces can be introduced for merchants wishing to integrate their business systems with the functionality supported by the present inventions. Merchants can update their online catalogs, retrieve information on orders placed, and send order status updates back via automated interfaces. This integration is accomplished through the establishment and use of a standardized communication protocol.

In a preferred embodiment, merchants integrate by exchanging specially formatted XML documents over secure HTTP connections (i.e. HTTP over SSL). If the request is a query, the HTTP response will contain an XML document with the query results. Likewise, if the request is a command, the

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response will be an XML document containing the success or failure of the command.

Automated requests and responses are XML documents as described by the W3C's XML 1.0 specification, which may be found at http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-xml and which is expressly incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. The XML specification only describes the syntax of an XML document, it does not place any restrictions on the content of the document. The content of requests and responses is described using a formal notation known as DCD (for Document Content Description). DCD's are described in a note that was submitted to the W3C by Microsoft and IBM. The DCD note can be viewed online at: http://www.w3.org/TR/NOTE-dcd and which is expressly incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. A specific DCD describes the format of a request or response in the same way that the SMTP specification describes the format of an email. Typical DCDs for Automated Interfaces may be accessed at the following URLS: http://automation.nexchange.net/dcd/ManageInventory.01.02.dcd.xml and http://automation.nexchange.net/dcd/ManageCatalog.01.02.dcd.xml, both documents are expressly incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

All interfaces have the same basic structure. The table below illustrates the basic structure of Automated Interface requests and responses.

		<ManageOrders specification='http://www.nexchange.net/automated/xml/ ManageOrders.01.01.dcd'>
HE		<RequestHeader>
		<Authentication username='xxx' password='xxx' scope='xxx' /> <Instructions OnFail='HALT'/>

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	Response		<Receipt Processor='xxx' Date='xxx' Number='xxx'/> <ResponseSummary Status='SUCCESS'> Error Message Here </ResponseSummary>
			</RequestHeader>
BODY			<RequestBody>
	Query		<Command status='SUCCESS'>
			<QueryNewOrders />
		query	<QueryNewOrdersResponse> *Query Results Here* </QueryNewOrdersResponse>
			</Command>
	Operation		<Command status='SUCCESS'> <AcknowledgeOrder order_id='xxx' item_price_total='xxx'/> </Command>
			</RequestBody>
			</ManageOrders>

All responses contain the original request with status information and query results appended. The table above shows a response to a Manage Orders request. The response is divided into a header and a body section ("RequestHeader" & "RequestBody" respectively).

The RequestHeader element contains authentication information and global instructions. When the request is returned, the request header will also contain a receipt and a response summary. The authentication element carries the information needed to identify and authenticate the requesting party. The global instruction element contains instruction on how the request is to processed if an error is received. The remainder of the commands in the request can be processed or the request can be discontinued. In a response, the receipt element is added to the request header. Information in the receipt can be used to

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recover the response. The response summary element contains a status code, which will be set to "SUCCESS" if all commands were completed successfully.

The RequestBody element contains one or more command elements. The exact content of a command element depends on the interface being used. When a command is submitted, its status attribute will always be "REQUESTED". When the command has been processed, the response will echo back the command with the status changed to "SUCCESS", "FAILURE" or "SKIP". In the case of a query command, the response will contain a query response in addition to the status.

If the request conforms to the DCD, the response will contain the original request with the status and query results embedded. The command status codes must be inspected to determine what has been done.

If the request did not conform to the specification, two possible error types can occur:

- XML Parsing Error
- DCD Validating Error

Errors are returned as NexError node. If a NexError is returned, the XML document has not been processed. The returned XML should always be examined for a NexError.

If the request document is not valid XML, an XML Parsing Error will be returned. A NexError node will be added around the entire document. It will look similar to the following:

```
<NexError Msg=" XML Parsing Error" ... >
  <XMLParseError errorcode=" " reason=" " line=" "
linepos=" ">
        offending section of document
  </XMLParseError>
</NexError>
```

The errorcode, reason, line and linepos will contain information explaining what the error is and the location in the file.

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If the request document is valid XML but does not match the published Interface DCD, a DCD Validating Error will be returned. A NexError node will be added around the entire document. A DCDError node will be embedded in the document at the location of the error. It will look similar to the following:

```
<NexError Msg=" XML Validating Error" … >
  <XMLValidateError msg="Find the DCDError Node in the
document for detailed error information."/>
        … Valid Portion of document …
        <DCDError message=" ">
            offending section of document
        </DCDError>
        … Valid Portion of document …
  </ XMLValidateError >
</NexError>
```

The following is an example request attempt to add one new product and to update the price of an existing product.

```
<ManageInventory
specification='http://automation.nexchange.net/dcd/Manage
Inventory.01.02.dcd.xml'>
    <RequestHeader>
        <Authentication username='xxxxx'
     password='xxxx' scope='MNNN'/>
        <Instructions onfail='CONTINUE'/>
    </RequestHeader>
    <RequestBody>
        <Command status='REQUESTED'>
            <AddProductDef updateifexists='1'>
                <ProductDef
                    id='saw'
                    skumask='saw'
                    name='saw'
```

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```
                description='A Circular Saw From Festo'
                 shortdescription='Festo Circular Saw'
                            info='no comment'

      image='http://216.0.58.242/rmtools/fw132saw.jpg'

    largeimage='http://216.0.58.242/rmtools/fw132saw.jpg
                                    '
                           usualprice='145.00'
                           saleprice='135.00'
                           compareprice='215.00'
                           salelabel='HOT PRICE'
                           instock='1'
                           commplan='default'
                       >
                           <AttributeDefList/>
                           <KeywordList/>
                       </ProductDef>
                   </AddProductDef>
              </Command>
              <Command status='REQUESTED'>
                   <UpdateProductDef
                           id='saw'
              image='http://216.0.58.242/rmtools/fw132saw.jpg
                                    '
                   />
              </Command>
         </RequestBody>
    </ManageInventory>
```

2. Host Manager

The Host Manager is the "Control Center" for Hosts. Here, a Host can track sales, design their store front, generate links to merchant products, get traffic/order reports, update account information, etc

For a host to gain access to the host manager system, the host must be registered. FIG. 4 depicts a flow chart for a typical registration process. A host representative may initiate contact **410** with the system via a web interface. The signup process must collect basic host information **420**, including the information necessary to pay the host a commission for purchases through his site, which is saved by the system **430**. Optionally, a click agreement containing terms of use **440** may be presented requiring agreement **444** to proceed. If at some point the representative elects to cancel **425, 458** or reject the use agreement **448**, he or she is returned to her point of entry **410**. The system may then request the representative to select a user identification and a password **450**. If the selected user identification is already in use **454**, the representative may be prompted to select a user identification **450**. The information associated with the host is stored **460**, and the representative may proceed to the host manager system page **470**.

When a host logs in, they are taken directly to the Host Manager, as seen in FIG. 10, and assigned a Host Session ID (Host SID). All pages within the host system must request the Host Sid and call the ValidateHostSessionID function. If the session does not validate, the user is taken back to the Login screen.

This module contains the following submodules:

- Account Information

This sub-module allows a host to maintain the following types of information:

- Administrative Contact – name, address, phone
- Payee Contact – name, address, phone, SSN
- Site Information – site name, URL, description
- Site Demographics – # of visitors, type of visitors, comments

A host representative will be able to maintain basic host information, including the information needed to pay the host, and the host's password. FIG. 5 depicts a flow chart of the pages and actions in a typical maintenance process.

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The representative has previously logged into the system to reach the host manager system page **470**. From the host manager system, the representative selects to update her account **510** leading to a host information maintenance page **520**. The representative can modify host information and, then choose to save or cancel the modification **530**. In either case, the representative is returned to the host manger system page **470**.

- Store Front Design

The store front design is where the host's look and feel is captured. The look and feel is captured by selecting an example page the host, retrieving the sample page from the host, identifying the look and feel elements from the sample page and saving the identified look and feel elements. "Look and feel elements" include logos, colors, page layout, navigation systems, frames, 'mouse-over' effects, or other elements that are consistent through some or all of a Host's website. A typical system for accomplishing this task would include a data store for storing look and feel descriptions, a communication channel to the host whose look and feel is to be captured and a processor for executing the capture.

When a customer clicks on a host buying opportunity (link), the next page loaded will be a shopping page. However, this shopping page should retain the host's look and feel. This is accomplished by capturing the HTML text and images that comprise their look and feel and embed within it the shopping HTML content. Any relative URLs in the host look and feel may be changed to absolute URLs back to the host system.

In a preferred embodiment, there are five steps to a process capturing the host's look and feel, converting relative URLs to absolute URLs and validation of links.

A host representative will be able to capture host look and feel information and to update host look and feel information through recapture. FIG. 6 depicts a flow chart of the pages and actions in a typical look and feel capture process. The representative has previously logged into the system to reach the host manager system page **470**. From this page, the representative

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selects to initiate host look and feel capture through a design storefront wizard **605**. An introduction page is presented explaining the process **610** from which the representative proceeds in the following manner:

- Base URL **615** – the URL used to convert relative links to absolute links, as seen in FIG. 11
- header **620** – the HTML to be rendered BEFORE the shopping html. Selection may be made by code, as seen in FIG. 12, by graphical point and click selection or other suitable selection method.
- footer **625** – the HTML to be rendered AFTER the shopping html. Selection may be made by code, as seen in FIG. 13, by graphical point and click selection or other suitable selection method.
- preview **630** – shows what the shopping page will look like (nothing has been captured yet). From this preview page **630**, as seen in FIG. 14, the representative may elect to return to earlier stage to perform a change **635**, **640** or **645** of base URL, header or footer respectively. The user may also have access to a preview **650** with example content included to demonstrate a typical page with both content and look and feel **680**, as seen in FIG. 15. From the generic preview page **630**, the representative may choose to continue **655** with finalizing the look and feel **660**.
- final check **660** - finalize the captured look and feel, as seen in FIG. 16, this page may allow validation of links and images and offer to save the captured look and feel. Once validation, if any has been performed, and the look and feel has been saved, the process completes **675**.
    - validation **665** – validate the link and image URLs in the header and footer HTML. FIG. 17 displays the screen capture of page that could be used to display validation progress.

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- save 670 – Actually captures, processes and saves the storefront information. A completion page such as seen in FIG. 18 may be displayed.

For security reasons, javascript is accepted but applets are stripped out in the preferred embodiment.

- Link Generator

The Link Generator allows host to create and maintain the shopping opportunities that they can then place on their site. Each Link is assigned a unique Link ID. The Link ID identifies who the host is, who the merchant is, and what commerce object (catalog, category, product or dynamic selection) is linked to.

The first time a host builds a Link to a merchant's product, category or catalog, an approval of that host for that merchant may be made. Until the host is approved, they cannot see the Link ID that has been assigned to the newly created Link.

The code the host embeds on their web site is as follows:

```
<!-- BEGIN NEXCHANGE LINK -->
<!-- For more information go to http://www.nexchange.com -->
<!-- The following 2 lines MUST NOT BE CHANGED to ensure proper crediting -->
<IMG BORDER='0' SRC='http://www.nexchange.net/img.asp?LinkID=xxxx'>
<a href='http://www.nexchange.net/route.asp?LinkID=xxxx'>
<!-- Substitute your own text or image below -->
** YOUR TEXT OR IMAGE HERE **</a>
<!-- END NEXCHANGE LINK -->
```

There are several points to note here:

- The image src (img.asp) is actually an ASP program that returns a single transparent pixel. This is used to track impressions (how many times the link was displayed on the host site).
- The route.asp page is a page that routes the customer to the shopping page. As additional servers are added, this will become very important for load balancing.

- The 'xxxx' for the LinkID='xxxx' is the Link ID assigned to the Link in the Link Generator.

A host representative will be able to generate links to commerce objects. FIG. 7 depicts a flow chart of the pages and actions in a typical link generation process. The representative has previously logged into the system to reach the host manager system page **470**. From this page, the representative selects to generate links **705**, which transfers her to a page containing a list of all previously generated links for that host **710**.

From this page, the representative may choose among several options: view an existing link **722**, remove an existing link **735**, edit an existing link **728** or add a new link to either a merchant with whom a link already exists **720** or a merchant without an existing link **715**. In viewing an existing link **722**, the page containing the link may optionally displayed in a separate window **725**; as a consequence, the representative could continue to interact with the list of available links page **710** in the primary window. The representative could select a link for removal **735** and, upon removal, return to the list of links page **710**. The representative may choose to edit an existing link **728** leading to a link modification page **730**. After modifying the link, the new link information would be saved **740**, and the representative would return to the list of available links **710**.

In adding a new link, a distinction may be made whether a link is made to a merchant to whom the host has previously linked **720** or to a merchant to whom a previous link does not exist **715**. In the latter case, an extra optional step may be involved to approve the host with respect to the new merchant as part of the catalog selection process **745**. In other embodiments, such a distinction need not be made. In linking to a merchant to whom a previous link does exist **720**, a catalog may implicitly be selected. In either situation, the creation process continues by allowing the representative to choose a commerce object to associate with the link **750**. Such a commerce object will be a product, a product category, a catalog or an indication that a product, product category or catalog should be chosen dynamically. From this page, the representative may

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go back to the catalog selection page **745** or proceed with setting link attributes **755** such as the destination upon return from the link (e.g. the point of departure into the e-commerce page or a destination designated by the representative). From this page **755**, the representative can return to the commerce object selection page **750** or continue forward with naming and saving the new link **760**. Upon completion of naming and saving page **760**, the link is saved to the system database **765**, and the representative is provided with a link to include within a page on the host website **770**. After cancellation at any time, or upon completion, the representative is returned to the list of available links page **710**.

Where a host representative chooses a dynamic indicator as the commerce object, the specific content will be chosen contextually based upon the content of the page that includes the link. In a preferred embodiment, keywords in the page are cross-reference with available catalogs, product categories and products to choose the appropriate content for the destination page associated with the link. FIG. 8 is a flow chart of the selection process in such a preferred embodiment.

A visitor is viewing the host page including a link associated with a dynamic selection commerce object **810**. The visitor activates the link. Receiving the activation, a determination is made as to whether content has previously been dynamically selected for the activated link **820**. If yes, a second determination is made as to whether the previously dynamically selected content is current **830**. If this is answered in the affirmative, a page is constructed with the previously dynamically selected content along with the look and feel associated with the host from which the link originated **840**.

If either determination is negative, the host page including the link is retrieved **850**. The page content is analyzed, and based upon the analysis, content for the link destination is selected **860**. The selected content is cached for potential future use **870**. Finally, a page is constructed with the dynamically selected content along with the look and feel associated with the host from which the link originated **840**. The analysis in **860** may take a variety of forms including, in a preferred embodiment, identification of marked keywords. In

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another embodiment, keywords may be dynamically determined using word count statistics.

In a more elaborate system, the retrieval process might encompass not only the page containing the link but also other pages linked to the page of link origin. Keywords or word count analysis could be used to determine context based upon the aggregation of pages retrieved. In a further embodiment, differing weights could be given based upon the source of the keyword identified; keywords from the page of origin would have a greater weight than keywords derived from pages one link away.

- Reports

A valid host representative will have on-demand access to a report showing visits to their links and sales. The report will be scoped by date range. Visits can be summarized by merchant and by link. Sales can be summarized by merchant and by link.

As illustrated in FIG. 21, a host representative begins at the Host Manager page **470**. She selects the view reports option **2105** to view the report menu page **2110**. From the reports menu page **2110**, she may enter criteria **2114, 2118** leading respectively to a revenue summary page **2120** or a monthly statement page **2130**. From the monthly statement page **2130**, she may change criteria **2135** to view a revised monthly statement **2130** or return to the report menu **2110**. From the revenue summary page **2120**, she may select a specific item **2125** for receiving a detailed revenue page **2150**, alter the criteria **2127** to receive a revised revenue summary **2120**, or return to the reports menu page **2110**. From the detailed revenue page **2150**, she may return to the revenue summary page **2120**.

The following reports are available for the hosts to track their results:

- Revenue Summary by Month

  This report provides sales and traffic information summarized by month. Data includes number of sessions, number of orders, gross and net sales, etc. Allows 'Drill Down' to daily totals.

- Revenue Summary by Merchant

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This report provides sales and traffic information summarized by merchant. Data includes number of sessions, number of orders, gross and net sales, etc.

- Revenue Summary by Link

This report provides sales and traffic information summarized by Link. Data includes number of sessions, number of orders, gross and net sales, etc.

3. Shopping

The shopping module is the part of the application that allows customers to find, search, select and buy a product. There is also a return product section accessible to the customer after the order has been placed.

Shopping is the part of the application that the general public will encounter. FIG. 19 displays a screen capture of a typical shopping page in a preferred embodiment. FIG. 22 depicts pages and procedures in a shopping process as implemented in a preferred embodiment.

The customer was on a host site and saw a link to buy something created via the Link generator **2200**. When he or she clicks on the link, he or she is taken to the shopping page parameterized with the Link ID **2210**. If an error occurs during this transition, the visitor is routed to a link error page **2205**.

A variety of generic information may be available from any shopping page within the system. Such information could include information about the e-commerce outsource provider **2222**, information about the merchant offering the current commerce object **2224**, information about an involved party's privacy policy **2226**, or information about an involved party's security policy **2228**.

Customers will be able to browse a merchant's catalogue and place items in their shopping cart **2212**. When the customer is ready to checkout **2260**, the system will acquire payment information **2262** and shipping information **2264** from the user, confirm this information **2266**, and execute the transaction. The receipt including a URL that can be used to track the order status (e.g. - it could be bookmarked) will be displayed to the customer **2268**. By visiting the URL provided upon checkout from the

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shopping experience, the customer can check the status of their order, initiate returns, and check on their return status.

This module contains the following submodules:

- Session

Each time a new shopping session is started, a customer session is created for the shopper. This Customer Session is assigned a Session ID (SID). All pages within the shopping system must request the SID and call the ValidateSessionID function. At any time if a session error occurs, a session error page **2215** may be presented.

Unlike the merchant and host sessions, the shopping session is persistent. The session information retained is what the customer has placed in the cart and if they have checked out. The SID is also written back to the customers browser as a cookie. If a customer returns to the Shopping page an attempt will be made to use the last session they had. It will only be reused if the ALL of the following are true:

  - The host the customer is coming from now is the same host as in the previous session
  - The merchant for the current link is the same as the merchant in the previous session
  - The previous session was not "Checked Out"
  - The session is not older than a certain age.

- Product Search and Selection

The main shopping page begins at the entry point that the host used to build the Link. This can be to a specific product, a category of products, a category of sub-categories, a complete catalog or a dynamically selected destination. However, no matter what entry point was chosen, the customer can navigate to every item contained in the merchant catalog used for the Link serving as the customer's entry point to the shopping. The customer may browse the catalog **2230** or search for a specific product or product category **2240**.

- Shopping Cart

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The Shopping Cart is the main information saved in a customer session. As a customer places products in the shopping cart, we retain information such as:

- name of the product
- price of the product
- any attributes (size, color, etc)
- host commission rate
- merchant revenue percent

This information must be stored redundantly in the shopping cart because the price, name, etc may change later and the values at the time of purchase need to be retained. The shopping cart interface also allows the shopper to remove a product and/or change the quantity through a view shopping cart page **2250**.

- Check Out

The check out process is separated into two distinct pieces.

- Order Capture
- Credit Validation

Order capture is the process of obtaining the customers billing and shipping information and creating a pending order. The credit card information is checked to make sure it is a valid number for the card type but it is not actually processed with a credit card authorization service (i.e. CyberCash). The order is accepted, assigned an order id and the customer is given an on screen and email confirmation. The pending order has a status of new.

The credit validation process happens sometime after the order capture has occurred. The customer's billing information is sent to the authorization service. The pending order now has the status of authorized.

If the card is validated, the order is accepted and placed into the TheOrder table. The pending order has a status of accepted. If the billing information fails validation, the pending order status is set to rejected and an email is sent to the customer informing that the credit card information could not be validated.

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4. System Manager

The System Manager is the "Control Center" for administrators. The administrator can monitor the day-to-day activities and status of the system. When an administrator logs in, he or she is taken directly to the System Manager and assigned a Nexchange Session ID (NexchangeSID). All pages within the System Manager system must request the NexchangeSID and call the ValidateNexchangeSessionID function. If the session does not validate, the user is taken back to the Login screen. Access to administration functions will require authentication using the name and password for a valid administration account.

The home/main page of the System Manager provides a quick summary of the current system status; a screen capture of a typical main page in a preferred embodiment is seen in FIG. 20. This summary includes pending orders, orders, host statistics, merchant statistics and an unattended orders list.

An administrator will be able to configure a hosts or merchant's payment policy. This includes specifications for any holdbacks, and a method for calculating commission/payment. At the request of a merchant, an administrator will be able to configure the system to reject all shopping traffic from a particular host-merchant arrangement. The host and merchant contacts will be notified via email. An administrator will also be able to activate or deactivate a host. The system will reject shopping traffic from inactive hosts. When a host's status is changed, the host contact will be notified via email. An administrator will configure the system to enforce system-wide policies. System-wide policies include the number of days allowed for returns.

The system will periodically run an audit process and report on situations of concern. For example, an audit could search for orders that have not been serviced for a certain period of time. The system may also report on possible security situations such as an inordinate number of account lockout incidents.

This module contains the following submodules:

- Utilities

  The following utilities are available:

  - List Pending Orders

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- List Orders
- List Rejected Orders
- List Returns

- Host

The following actions are available:

- List Promos
- List Hosts
- Maintain Host Tiers
- Host with Pending Merchants

- Merchant

The following actions are available:

- List Merchants
- Copy a Category
- Find Category Links
- Add a New Merchant
- Maintain Brands

Application Server Tier

The business functionality is provided via "application servers". An application server will consist of one or more of the business modules, wrapped with an appropriate middleware adapter. This arrangement allows delivery of services via many different mechanisms. For example, if it becomes desirable to serve some functions to a Java client, a Java Remote Method Invocation (RMI) version of an application server could be built. The new server could be developed rapidly because only an RMI "wrapper" would need to be developed, while the application logic would be reused. In a preferred embodiment, this layer consists of a set of core C++ software modules that encapsulate business functions.

The Application Server tier may run on one or more application server computers. The application servers are stateless. This means that, for two application servers serving the same functionality, "one is as good as another". In the event of failure, a client's requests may be handled by a different server than before the failure. Since it does not matter which server services a request, routing is greatly simplified.

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The stateless server approach also provides excellent fault tolerance since all application servers can back each other up. Use of a combination of "sticky routing" and caching to significantly ameliorate any detrimental performance implications of the stateless approach, while preserving most of the benefit. Once a client begins using a particular service, the system will show a preference for routing future requests from that client to the same server. The servers maintain a cache recently used data and will only access the database if the desired item cannot be used in cache. Since the routing is sticky, the client's data will often be in cache, and in many cases, no database access will be required. Should the client be routed to a new server, the session data can be retrieved from the database as occurs in the "vanilla" stateless model. In a preferred embodiment, the functionality of this layer utilizes one or more low cost server systems **125a - 125d** running a suitable operating system such as Microsoft Windows NT. This tier is also composed of several software layers as illustrated in FIG. 3:

- Remote Procedure Call Server **310**. This software provides connectivity to the Web Server layer and is not application dependent. In a preferred embodiment, this software layer is the Objectstore Component Server.
- Application Logic **320**. This software encapsulates the business functionality. The design of this software layer and the various application servers is more fully described below.
- Virtual Database **330**. The virtual database layer allows the application data to be distributed across multiple Database servers while insulating the application layer from the physical storage configuration. The virtual database contains a table that maps object types to physical databases. All database objects or records of a given type are distributed across the permissible databases. Databases can be added while the system is live to permit expansion onto new servers. Overburdened databases can be closed to prevent assignment of new data to them. Databases can be moved to different physical servers. All stored objects are referenced by a handle which is unaffected by the physical location of the referenced data. The virtual database layer also permits a collection of objects distributed across multiple servers to be indexed and searched.

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- DBMS Client **340**. This software provides access to data stored in the databases. In a preferred embodiment, the DBMS client is Object Design's Objectstore client. All Objectstore clients contain a cache of recently used database pages. An optimistic locking scheme is used to ensure cache consistency. The caching scheme is very effective in the present invention because it is optimized for many readers and few writers.

In a preferred embodiment, the application server layer includes the following eight application servers:

1. Cashier - Collects checkout information: billing info, shipping preferences, etc.

The Cashier server is analogous to a cashier in a "bricks and mortar" store. The cashier's responsibilities are listed below:

- Collecting Information Necessary To Complete a Sale. This information will include billing information, shipping address(s) and preferred shipping methods. In some cases, the information to be collected may depend on the contents of the order. The cashier will also access the appropriate merchant policy information to assist in determining what data should be collected.
- Providing an Itemized Account of the Total. Upon receiving the necessary data, the cashier will compute the applicable taxes, shipping charges, etc, and provide an itemized account of the order total.
- Execute the Sale. Upon request, the cashier will execute the sale. A copy of the relevant information will be sent to the credit processor. When the credit processor approves the orders, the cashier will break the customer's order into individual merchant orders and forward them to the Merchants' Order Tracking server. The cashier will also post a record to the Ledger at this time.

2. Catalog - Houses product hierarchies. Conducts product searches.

The catalog is an arrangement of product information. The catalog server supports a hierarchical browsing mode and various searching functions. Its responsibilities are listed below:

- Retrieve a catalog upon request. The catalog will include all content for a shopping experience. For products, the information will include the product description, price and options.

- Retrieve a list of products matching a query. This will initially support simple keyword searching, but may be expanded to more sophisticated searching techniques.

3. Credit Processor - Conducts card validation and fraud screening.

The credit processor takes a candidate order and performs card authorization and fraud screening. The card processor cooperates with the order tracker to keep the status of the order updated.

- Perform Credit Card Authorization. Contact the card processing vendor and authorize the card. Retrieve the Address Verification System (AVS) code for use in fraud screening.
- Perform Fraud Screening. The system performs a fraud screening analysis based on the following factors: dollar amount of the order, AVS code, whether the billing and shipping address match, and whether the email address given is a free e-mail account.

4. Notifier - Sends messages.

The Notifier keeps track of who wants to be notified of what and how they should be notified. The notifier receives notification of various system events and takes the appropriate course of action. The appropriate course of action will depend upon the event and the party to be notified. For example, a merchant that does a high volume of sales and is already integrated with the system may not wish to receive email notification of every order.

5. Ledger - Records and reports on all financial events.

The Ledger is a record of all financial events. The ledger contains interfaces for posting events and interfaces querying and inspecting the ledger. Responsibilities include:

- Post an Order Event. The order event happens when the shopper confirms an order.
- Post a Sale Event. The sale event occurs when a merchant marks the last item in an order shipped.
- Post an Return Merchandise Authorization (RMA) Open Event/Post an RMA Completed Event/Post an RMA Canceled Event

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- Post a Journal Entry. This interface will be used to record non-standard events. The posted ledger entries must collectively have an equal number of debits and credits.

6. Order Tracker - Records and reports on order status.

This is the repository of order information. The order tracker includes a cashier's interface for creating a new order, a Merchant's interface for keeping the order status updated, and a Customer Service interface for checking on the status of the order and making relevant annotations.

- Query Order Status. This method is used by purchaser to check on the status of a pending order.
- Ship Order. This method is used by a merchant to document the parceling of an order into shipments.

7. Shopping Cart - Holds products that have been selected for purchase.

The shopping cart is simply a collection of Inventory Reservation documents that represent the items that have been selected by the shopper. The shopping cart includes methods for adding and removing Inventory Reservations and for inspecting the contents of the cart.

8. Warehouse - Inventory availability information. Product configuration interfaces.

The Warehouse represents a collection of physical items that are in stock. Responsibilities of the Warehouse are listed below:

- Provide Information on Stock Levels of a Particular Item/Order Items Having Low Inventory Levels. This is an advanced capability by which inventory may be dynamically reserved from a merchant, based on the current inventory levels.
- Provide Information on Product Configuration Options. The warehouse will provide a blank Inventory Reservation document that will specify all of the product's configuration options.
- Issue Reservations Against Inventory. A shopper will fill out an Inventory Reservation (which includes all configuration options) and submit it to the warehouse. If the item, as configured, is available, the reservation will be issued. This will serve to reserve the inventory for a fixed period of time.

Database Server Tier

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Finally, the Database server tier is composed of a single software layer. This layer is responsible for low level manipulation of the data in the one or more databases. This tier may consist of multiple database servers. Using multiple servers is a major advantage for obvious reasons. The system's database chores can be distributed to many different servers. In a preferred embodiment, the database server is Object Design's Objectstore server. Objectstore supports a "warm failover" mode which allows a backup server to take over automatically if the primary should fail. An Microsoft SQL server is also used in the preferred embodiment to maintain financial records although properly configured another DBMS such as Objectstore or a commercially available accounting package could provide capability suitable for financial record keeping.

The foregoing discussion describes the primary actors interacting with a system according to the present invention. After identifying these actors, typical transaction flows through the system are presented.

There are three main parties in the outsourced e-commerce relationship, excluding the end consumer. These parties include Merchants, Hosts, and the e-commerce outsource provider. This folds into two parties where one party plays the dual role of Host and Merchant.

Merchants

Merchants are the producers, distributors, or resellers of the goods to be sold through the outsource provider. The primary responsibilities of a Merchant are to:

- Maintain an up-to-date catalog within the system including all products that are available for sale in storefronts served by the outsource provider
- Create approval standards for passively recruited Host applicants based upon website profiles and target audience characteristics
- Fulfill all orders received from the e-commerce outsource provider
- Provide assistance to outsource provider regarding promotional strategies. This can be accomplished by supplying marketing literature and materials, as well as any sales incentives. The Merchant *owns* the marketing literature and materials, and may access and modify these items as necessary.

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- Provide service and support to customers generated via the outsource e-commerce provider
- Maintain internal records of orders filled through the outsource provider and process payments from the outsource provider for these orders
- Inform the e-commerce outsource provider of any backlogs, fulfillment delays, product changes, or other significant situations

Hosts

A Host is the operator of a website that engages in Internet commerce by incorporating one or more link to the e-commerce outsource provider into its web content. The responsibilities of a Host are to:

- Use the outsource provider Host Manager service bureau to select the Merchants and products that will be offered from the Host's website
- Promote transactions through the e-commerce outsource provider hosted by the website
- Regularly review the Merchant offerings for which they have been approved in order to take advantage of new products and to review sales and promotional strategies made available to them by the Merchant

E-commerce Outsource Provider

The role of outsource provider is to:

- Develop and maintain the outsource provider service bureau -- the systems and software which provide the platform for e-commerce support services
- Identify and recruit target Host websites and monitor/manage these relationships
- Create customer-transparent Host processing "pages" on a secure server to receive order and payment information
- Create, maintain, and update the "look & feel capture" process through which consumers are able to shop in a Merchant-controlled storefront within the design and navigational context of the Host website, preserving the ownership of the visit experience by the Host
- Authorize credit card transactions (in most cases)
- Process credit card payments for orders received (in most cases)

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- Pay periodic commissions to Hosts for orders shipped during a prior period
- Transmit orders to Merchants
- Pay Merchants for orders filled
- Manage the commission structure for Merchant-Host relationships to maximize sales and revenues
- Screen and approve Host applications
- Support and monitor the merchandise return/refund process and other customer service functions

This following describes the order entry and settlement process from the initial promotion on a Host website all the way through to fulfillment, payment processing, commission payment, and Merchant payment.

Order Placement, Fulfillment, and Settlement Overview

The overall transaction process is very straightforward. The following is a list of the steps involved in receiving and processing an order request.

a) A customer visits a Host website and, through contextually relevant content, becomes interested in a product offered.

b) The customer selects the item(s) that she wishes to purchase by clicking a product image, banner-style link, or text link, or other offer format taking her to a dynamically generated web pages which retain the look and feel of the referring Host and are served by the e-commerce outsource provider.

c) The customer browses through the products offered, indicating which items are to be purchased and in what quantities via forms on-screen. Selected items appear within the shopping cart at the top of the shopping interface. The user remains on the product screen without ever being involuntarily removed to a detailed shopping cart-only screen, representing a significant enhancement over most shopping cart technology in place today. When all desired products are selected, the customer initiates the checkout procedure, never leaving the Host website.

d) The secure checkout interface appears, still consistent in look and feel with the Host's referring website. The customer completes the order form, provides all billing and shipping information required, confirms the items selected for purchase, and remits credit card information for payment processing.

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e) Assuming the payment method is authorized, the customer is returned to another section of the Host's website, possibly just returning to the page in which the offer was placed, as determined by the Host.

f) The e-commerce outsource provider passes the order to the Merchant in real time. The credit card may be charged at this point or upon confirmation of shipment.

g) The Merchant receives and logs the order.

h) The Merchant then assembles and ships the order to the customer, keeping the outsource provider apprised of the order status.

i) Periodically, the outsource provider will remit payment to the Merchant for that period's filled orders.

j) Periodically, the outsource provider will remit payment to Hosts for all commissions earned in the prior period.

Host Process Flow

The process flow for a prospect to become a Host and be fully able to endorse/promote/offer Merchant products is as follows:

a) Hosts are recruited from three sources: direct recruiting, in which the Host prospect is identified by and approached by an e-commerce outsource provider representative; passive recruiting, in which the Host has been referred to the outsource provider by other Hosts, relevant meta-sites (sites that contain lists of and links to other sites/services), or other sources; and Host Agent recruits, in which a specialized third party Agent identifies and approaches Host prospects. In many cases, the use of online signup forms and brochures may be a factor in recruitment.

b) Prospect completes the Host application form (except where preapproved), providing information about the type of website(s) operated by the Host, some traffic statistics about these websites and general visitor demographics, and complete contact information. The prospect also selects an outsource provider system user ID and password which will later be used to access the system, retrieve important Hosting information and programming, and modify the custom materials in the outsource provider transaction processing engine.

c) The application is received and the information therein is reviewed, and the application is either approved or rejected (unless this is a preapproved Host). If

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approved, the Host's ID and password are activated, and an automated message is sent to the new Host informing them of their approval. This message will also contain instructions for accessing the e-commerce outsource provider system, setting up their links to the outsource provider, and inserting outsource provider data into their website(s). Preapproved Hosts will be immediately able to access this system upon submission of their application.

d) Host accesses e-commerce outsource provider system to begin the step-by-step setup process. The Host first identifies a page from their own website which will provide the look and feel to be replicated. Following this, the Host configures product selections for each of its approved Merchants and downloads product images, text, and CGI/HTML code for their own website. Host then completes changes to website and activates new content. Hosts are free to promote their use of the outsource provider as they feel is suitable to the product at any time and with any frequency, subject to reasonable limitations.

e) Hosts will be able to access real-time reports about transaction volume including number of users, average purchase amount per user, number of purchases on specified days or within specified date ranges. Hosts can create customized reports to determine conversion rates, top selling products, commissions earned, paid, and due, and other pertinent information. This information can be leveraged by the e-commerce outsource provider and the Host to improve the efficacy of targeted marketing efforts on the Host's website.

Internal System Transaction Flow

The e-commerce outsource provider system acts as a clearinghouse for all orders. The system maintains a real-time interface with a credit card authorization and processing service and a robust database engine which is able to process transactions, record all transaction activities, generate reports used for commission payments and auditing of Merchant invoices, and track order status. The transaction flow for the outsource provider service bureau is directly related to the structure of the underlying database.

This flow can be described as follows:

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a) Customer, visiting Host, activates link to commerce object within context of Host's website. This activation is typically accomplished by clicking on a hyperlink of some kind within a webpage of the Host's website.

b) The e-commerce outsource provider launches new storefront featuring specific products or product category for Merchant, as determined by Host, with the look and feel of the Host's site. The user is not made aware of the fact that this shopping experience is taking place on an outsourced server.

c) As customer browses through featured items in the Merchant's catalog, the outsource provider serves additional pages while maintaining the look and feel of the Host. The system maintains a dynamic record of customers activities including products reviewed, items selected for purchase (placed into shopping cart), and time spent shopping. The e-commerce outsource provider uses a highly reliable and accurate tracking technology throughout the shopping experience.

d) Upon checkout, the system processes customer billing, shipping, and order information via secure (encrypted) data transmission (unless the consumer opts for non-encrypted transmission). This process includes an order confirmation process and a process by which a non-approved credit card transaction may be corrected and resubmitted.

e) Upon approval, the outsource provider performs several simultaneous functions:

- Thank you screen is displayed to customer
- Customer is prompted to "continue" browsing Host's website.
- E-mail confirmation is sent to customer detailing order information, fulfillment process, customer service terms and procedures, and other relevant information.
- Order is transmitted to the Merchant electronically, via e-mail or direct link to order entry system.
- Order is logged into transaction database and logged by system in conjunction with Host referral information.
- Host is notified that a sale has been made and commission dollars have been earned.

The second part of the e-commerce outsource provider service bureau transaction process pertains to reconciliation and settlement with the Merchants.

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a) Orders are transmitted to each Merchant as received and are logged into the system for future reference and reporting.

b) Periodically, the outsource provider will pay each Merchant for orders processed during the prior period. Payment will be driven by shipped orders as recorded within the system. Merchants can view their accumulated sales within the system at any time during the period, and historical information will be available as well.

The final part of the e-commerce outsource provider Service Bureau transaction process pertains to the payment of commissions to Hosts.

c) Periodically, the e-commerce outsource provider will calculate the accumulated commissions due to each Host from the prior period's results. Hosts will be able to review their earnings on a real-time basis at any point during a period.

d) The outsource provider will then pay each Host the appropriate commission amount via electronic payment or check along with a copy of the transactions and total report for the period being settled.

Merchant Transaction Flow

Each Merchant will be required to fulfill every order received through the e-commerce outsource provider within a designated time frame. Merchants must also be able to track certain information regularly and accurately. Merchants will be monitored to ensure timely fulfillment in order to provide the best quality customer service.

The steps of the Merchants transaction flow after they have been established within the system are as follows:

a) The designated recipient of orders within the Merchant organization will check for new orders at least on a daily basis, if not more frequently. Orders are received by the Merchant via e-mail or other electronic notification, including automated direct input to legacy order management systems owned or operated by the Merchant. These orders include all pertinent customer data required for fulfillment of each order. Merchants may also view all orders online, sorted by date, status (new/viewed), or other criteria, and download orders in bulk form directly from the outsource provider.

b) After receiving the order, the Merchant will ship the order to the Customer within a reasonable time period for the type of merchandise ordered. Merchant will have the

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ability to modify the shipping status of the orders within the system. Merchants are obligated to provide timely shipping of their products. If any item ordered is out of stock or discontinued, the Merchant must update their catalog on the e-commerce outsource provider immediately and notify any affected customers immediately via e-mail or regular mail. Orders should be processed according to whatever internal process flow has been established by the Merchant.

c) Upon receipt of payment for the prior month's orders, the Merchant is responsible for reconciling the amount remitted with their own fulfillment records. Any disputes should be addressed by accessing the Merchant interface and querying/updating records.

The embodiments described above are given as illustrative examples only. It will be readily appreciated that many deviations may be made from the specific embodiment disclosed in this specification without departing from the invention. Accordingly, the scope of the invention is to be determined by the claims below rather than being limited to the specifically described embodiment above.

What is claimed is:

1. An e-commerce outsourcing process providing a host website in communication with a visitor computer with context sensitive, transparent e-commerce support pages, comprising the steps of:
   a) capturing a look and feel description associated with a host website;
   b) providing the host website with a link for inclusion within a page on the host website for serving to a visitor computer, wherein the provided link correlates the host website with a selected commerce object; and
   c) upon receiving an activation of the provided link from the visitor computer, serving to the visitor computer an e-commerce supported page with a look and feel corresponding to the captured look and feel description of the host website associated with the provided link and with content based on the commerce object associated with the provided link.

2. The process of claim 1, wherein the selected commerce object is a selected product.

3. The process of claim 1, wherein the selected commerce object is a selected product category.

4. The process of claim 1, wherein the selected commerce object is an indicator for dynamic content selection.

5. The process of claim 4, wherein the content within the served page is dynamically selected according to contextual information derived from the page on the host website including the provided link.

6. An e-commerce outsourcing system providing a host website in communication with a visitor computer with context sensitive, transparent e-commerce support pages, comprising:

a) a data store including a look and feel description associated with a host website;

b) a communications link to a visitor computer; and

c) a processor for executing instructions that perform the steps of:

i) capturing a look and feel description associated with a host website;

ii) storing the captured look and feel description in the data store;

iii) providing the host website with a link for inclusion within a page on the host website correlating the host website with a selected commerce object; and

iv) upon receiving an activation of the provided link via the communication link, serving an e-commerce supported page via the communication link with a look and feel corresponding to the captured look and feel description of the host website associated with the provided link and with content based on the commerce object associated with the provided link.

7. The system of claim 6, wherein the data store further includes a product record and wherein the selected commerce object is a selected product record.

8. The process of claim 6, wherein the data store further includes a product category record and wherein the selected commerce object is a selected product category record.

9. The process of claim 6, wherein the selected commerce object is an indicator for dynamic content selection.

10. The process of claim 9, wherein the content within the served page is dynamically selected according to contextual information derived from the page on the host website including the provided link.

11. A look and feel description capture system, comprising:

a) a data store for storing look and feel descriptions;

b) a communication link to a target website; and

c) a processor for executing instructions that perform the steps of:

i) receiving an identification for an example page from the target website;

ii) retrieving the example page via the communication link;

iii) identifying look and feel elements within the retrieved example page; and

iv) storing the identified look and feel elements as a look and feel description associated with the target website in the data store.

12. A look and feel description capture process, comprising the steps of:

a) receiving an identification for an example page from a target website;

b) retrieving the example page via a communication link to the target website;

c) identifying look and feel elements within the retrieved example page; and

d) storing the identified look and feel elements as a look and feel description associated with the target website in a data store.

13. A system for serving pages containing dynamically selected content, comprising:

a) an index data store including records associated with pages containing links designated for dynamic content selection;

b) a content data store including dynamically selectable content;

c) a communication link to a visitor computer

d) a processor for executing instructions that perform the steps of:

i) receiving the activation of a link designated for dynamic content selection via the communication link;

ii) accessing a record in the index data store associated with the page containing the activated link;

iii) selecting content from the content data store based upon the accessed record;

iv) constructing a page containing the selected content; and

v) serving the constructed page via the communication link.

14. A cost effective, scalable system for serving dynamically constructed Web pages, comprising:

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a) a Web server layer comprising one or more processors;

b) an application server layer comprising one or more processors, wherein each processor executes one or more application servers; and

c) A database server layer comprising one or more processors and a data store including content for use in dynamically constructing Web pages;

wherein a processor of the Web server layer is programmed to perform the following:

i) receive an end user request;

ii) determine a way to process data as required to respond to the end user request;

iii) select an application server that processes data in the determined way;

iv) request processed data from the selected application server running on a selected processor of the application server layer;

v) receive the requested processed data from the determined application server running on the selected application server layer processor;

vi) construct a Web page containing the received processed data; and

vii) serve the constructed Web page; and

wherein a processor of the application server layer is programmed to perform the following:

i) receive a request for processed data from a selected processor of the Web server layer directed to a selected application server;

ii) request data required to fulfill the received request from a database server running on a selected processor of the database server layer;

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iii) receive the required data from the database server running on the selected database server layer processor;

iv) process the received, required data using the selected application server into the requested processed data; and

v) forward the requested processed data to the selected Web server layer processor; and

wherein a processor of the database server layer is programmed to perform the following:

i) receive a request for data from a selected processor of the application server layer;

ii) retrieve the request data from the data store; and

iii) forward the requested data to the selected processor of the application server.

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