

# The internet is a communication platform marketing essay

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



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\n[/toc]\n \nLITERATURE REVIEWThe Internet is a communication platform which is not restricted by place or time . The internet enhances inexpensive and convenient communication with widely dispersed communities of shared interest . The news industry has been most affected by the development of the electronic channel. The growing development of communications through the Internet and its subsequent use as a medium for publishing digital newspapers has led to substantial changes in this sector . addressed the importance of websites for sports by recognizing that the internet may be regarded as a sports encyclopedia and is an ideal place for sports information. stated that the rapid development of internet shifts in website design and changes in the typical online consumer. It has raised the concerns for publishers that compete in the e-commerce industry. Web sites need to ensure potential customers are visiting, engaging and returning, all

while being thoroughly satisfied with their experiences. This induces web users to make voluntary and conscious choices to visit sites resulted in design and content creation. In order to survive to provide information, newspapers must make profit and advertising is the primary source of revenue for online newspaper . The growth in internet advertising revenue and spending on online advertising indicates the interest advertisers have about the internet and their enthusiasm to allocate large amount of budget to utilize it . Website traffic is one of the most important performance indicators for web sites. Site traffic not just tells popularity of the website, it also provides a basis for acquiring revenue from web-based advertising activities . The most common pricing model for Internet advertising: cost per thousand impressions (CPM) or cost per click-through (CPC). In the CPM model, an advertiser pays when a visitor has been given an opportunity to see an advertisement. This approach is similar to print advertising which depends on the circulation. In the CPC model, the advertiser pays only when a visitor clicks on an advertisement. Both models rely on page views . To be a successful and profitable sports news section in news websites, it needs to attract a large volume of visitors and consistently deliver a high level of website quality . A larger number of visitors reflects that a website is better able to generate interest in its Web site . Obtaining and retaining visitors on a website continues to be one of the most elusive problems facing the Internet firm . Thus, many web publishers increasingly adopt different strategies to generate more website traffic. Website QualityWeb site quality is widely studied as a crucial factor in the e-commerce literature . A number of studies have already been conducted to figure out the dimension of web

site quality. They advocate consistently high quality information content, along with effective design, navigation, security, and functionality, as critical factors of website success . suggest a framework from marketing and information system literature. The framework identifies four factors that are essential for web site success in e-commerce: information quality, system use, playfulness and system design quality. Concerning the web site quality, most of the instruments measure the information content of a site as a single construct (e. g. " The information on the website is pretty much what I need to carry out my tasks,") or examine the believability, accuracy, timeliness and completeness of the information on the site, however, without looking at what specific information should be on the website . According to Technology Acceptance Model, the website quality construct mainly aims to measure the " usefulness" and " usability" of websites . There are many discussions on beliefs, attitudes and intentions based on TAM . To sum up, TAM states the perceived usefulness and ease of use are affected by web site quality and will influence an individual's attitude and intention to use a web site . However, raise out that attribute of a successful web sites should be more than usefulness and usability. also support WebQual to be utilized to evaluate a web site from a customer's perspective. They consider that, from a customer's point of view, web site quality can be identified through four components: functionality, content, service and attractiveness. Information quality is considered to play an important role in user perceptions of the information-intensive Web Sites . A number of studies clearly indicate that web site interface including information quality, usability, and attractiveness all have a significant effect on a consumer's

perceptions about a web site, increase the percentage of those who intend to visit a website, and influence how much they are inclined to engage . Based on the above literature review, four factors are identified: system quality, information quality, service quality and attractiveness. Web site quality may also depend on the types of web sites, e. g. music, book, travel, computer . This paper focuses on the website quality of sports section of local portals.

## **Usability**

Usability measures the functionality of a web site . shows that the effort that a person employs in achieving a goal is straightly associated to the satisfaction he/she experiences upon its attainment. Online users are very concerned not only about having a web site easy to read, as well as easy to navigate, but also the consistency of the user interface, ease of use, response rates on the web pages . put forward that a responsive web site is highly important to users. emphasizes that a page design should consider not only appearance but also loading time. Based on the above literature, the usability of a web site can be examined by navigation, responsiveness and design. NavigationIt reflects the degree to which a tool or structure assist a web site user to find information as perceived by the user . states that web site should take navigation into consideration at design stage to avoid users losing track of the context or not knowing of how to proceed. Some of the portals are large and this makes users difficult to find a particular piece of information . Navigation tools can guide users to maintain a mental map of where they are, and how various sections or pages are linked to each other . Tools for navigation include: menus, directories,

frames, buttons, site maps, subject trees, a search engine, image maps and colors . It is helpful to have a site map that web site users can use to see the structure of the site and maneuver around it .

ResponsivenessResponsiveness refers to the willingness to give hand to customers. It can be deliberated by the time taken before replying to a customer's inquiries . Advances in the internet and computer technology leave little excuse for any delay in responding . considers the issue of responsiveness can be examined by search time and loading time. Search time mostly depends on the volume of the database. Many pages are designed with being aware of the loading time problems and have limited graphics and animation. Weinberg (2000) stated that one of the e-commerce challenges on the web is when users suffer from intolerably long waits for a web site's page to load. When the loading time exceeds the time that a web user is willing to wait, the web user will either redirect the web-browser to elsewhere or not visiting the web . concludes, in terms of waiting time on the web site, shorter the loading time, higher the quality of the web site evaluated. DesignDesign captures the non-verbal features which enhance the customer's preference for a web site. Non-verbal features include graphics, video clips, audio clips and animation. These features can have an impact on the perception of web sites whether it is regarded as pleasing. argue that the overall appeal is a one of the key elements of web site quality. They think that no matter how well the content is or how reliable and easy to search the web site is, if users do not find the site attractive, they are not going to employ much time there. Certainly, graphical elements can enhance communication by helping visitors find or interpret the information

presented, nevertheless, more multi-media enabled content takes more time to download. Thus, designers must strike a balance between an appealing design and providing information . It is probably not a good idea to go extreme with elaborate graphics, which add no more valued information. People may visit the same web site frequently, graphical design may appear impressive when they are first seen but quickly become dull when they have appeared many times before .

### **Information quality**

Information quality refers to the website content issues. " Content is King" was a popular slogan in online news service development . Researchers validating the DeLone and McLean Model of Information System Success (1989, 1992) support that the relationship between information quality and decision-making performance to be significant . The literature on technology usage and user satisfaction has also suggested that information quality has a significant impact on user satisfaction . . advocates information quality should be associated with nine characteristics, namely, accuracy, precision, currency, output timeliness, reliability, completeness, conciseness, format and relevance. In a recent study, information quality is interpreted in terms of accuracy, timeliness, completeness, relevance, and consistency Providing information is the primary objective of a web site . suggest that providing the suitable information on a website could impact on usage preference of a website dramatically, and ultimately improve a visitor's intention to revisit. The reasoning stands that the target audience a web site wants to draw drive the site content . Thus, deciding what content to place on a web site is

extremely considerable. address the issue of how customers' acceptance towards web sites is affected by the accurate information. Content consists of two constructs: information accuracy and relevance . Information accuracyThe most basic function of a web site is to present information about products, services, people, events or ideas . Web site image can be jeopardized resulting from providing the inappropriate information on the site. Therefore, it is necessary for websites to pay their attentions to the expedient factors to improve the information quality . advocate the information on the web site should be accurate, informative and updated. examine the significance of updated information on web sites. Updated information means both updating existing content and adding new content to the site. For example, Apple Daily Hong Kong (<http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com>), in its side bar, that its list of news is updated frequently. Information relevanceInformation relevance refers to the degree that whether the information on the web site is relevant to the users' needs or not . Publishers should not just identify their potential customers, but also to figure out their needs . considers different parts of the web site should be tailor-made to fulfill the needs of different group of customers which guide the development of different sections of the web site.

### **Service quality**

Service quality is a significant dimension of web site success . It measures the comprehensive support provided by the web site. Service quality consists of trust and empathy. In other words, the web site should be secure and personalized . TrustTrust is known as the extent to which customers believe



the web site is legal, secured, ethical and credible and is able to protect their privacy . According to a survey done by the European Electronic Messaging Association, more than 79 percent of respondents said that security is the top of their concerns . It is therefore important for web site designers to realize trust should be considered to avoid the effect of cumulative frustration, especially as it is typically in the later stages of interaction. . EmpathyEmpathy is defined as the degree to which a web site provides mindfulness and personalized information to users . Empathy is the availability of two-way communication between web site and users for enhancing the quality of web sites. The concept of empathy involves the swop of individualized messages no matter what distance or time. The internet is perfectly suited as users can visit any web site at any time and from any place .

## **SATISFACTION**

### **An Integrated Online Customer Loyalty Model**

According to , satisfaction is defined as " pleasurable fulfillment". This pleasurable fulfillment is driven from satisfying a need, desire or goal during web usage. It is the user's sense that consumption provides outcomes against a standard of pleasure versus displeasure. As mentioned by , satisfaction is a state of experience that might vary in intensity but not in quality. In other words, satisfaction is the outcome of an evaluative process, where consumers examine the results of their prior service use and decide whether or not to continue using the service . A consumer's satisfaction level reflects how successfully and effectively a website implements its business

operations . According to , satisfaction is defined as an affective consumer condition that results from a global evaluation of all the aspects which build up relationship with users. Satisfaction can be understood into two distinct perspectives, economic satisfaction and non-economic satisfaction . Economic satisfaction is defined as a positive affective predisposition sustained by economic rewards, such as revenue or profit margins obtained. On the contrary, non-economic satisfaction considers website users' positive affective response resulted from psychological factors, such as users being respected or their opinion being adopted. In the online environment, the psychological perspective is focused more on so that satisfaction is understood not as user behavior that reflects satisfaction with the behavior of the web site publisher, but as an attitude resulting from the interactions induced by the user and the web site publisher. User satisfaction is widely acknowledged as a desirable outcome of any product or service experience because it is one of the most significant criteria for measuring success in online industry. In most studies on information technology success, it is an element to predict behavioural consequences . E-satisfaction, in a similar vein, refers to " the contentment of the customer with respect to his or her prior purchasing experience" with a given website (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003, p. 125). In this study, e-satisfaction is proposed as another important construct for understanding online sport fans' intentions and ultimate behavior. Antecedents of e-satisfaction have been identified by researchers. For example, to capture e-satisfaction, Szymanski and Hise (2000) used consumer perceptions of convenience, merchandising, website design, and financial security. E-satisfaction is also affected by online consumers'

expectations about information quality and perceived performance (McKinney, Yoon, & Zahedi, 2002). In this study, we focused only on overall satisfaction to reflect all encounters and experiences provided by a sport news website to a consumer. As such, overall satisfaction may reflect consumer willingness to revisit the website (Jones & Sasser, 1995).

## **Website Quality and Satisfaction**

The relationship between website quality and customer satisfaction has received heavy attention during the past decades, with previous studies finding that service quality is an important predictor of customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction has been found to be influenced more by quality than by price or value. In the online context, found that the system quality of a website is positively related to website user satisfaction. Likewise, found that e-satisfaction is influenced not only by product quality but also by website quality, including website design, security/privacy concerns, and convenience applications. Similarly, website users' overall satisfaction is influenced by website characteristics such as ease-of-use. As such, website quality has been a robust antecedent of e-satisfaction. Consequently, we propose (see Figure 1): H1. SWQ positively influences sport fans'e-satisfaction.

## **LOYALTY**

Loyalty is a commitment to re-buy or re-consume a preferred product or service. Consumer loyalty is one of the most important outcomes of a sport-related online business (E-loyalty). Loyalty provides a meaningful indicator of success for an organization in a competitive market environment. Building

loyalty is vital for all companies, particularly those on the web, where people are overloaded by so many alternatives and can easily swap to another option . Given that switching costs are very low in online contexts where alternative websites are only one ' mouse click' away, understanding how consumers develop loyalty is critical for all business organizations (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003). Loyalty cannot rely on technology. Although internet can strengthen relationship between website and customers, loyalty is induced through delivery of superior customer experience . When an organization copes with customer loyalty, profitability increases through enhanced revenues and reduced costs to get customers . Consumer loyalty is defined as " a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same-brand set purchases, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior" . Customer loyalty has been recognized by a large number of authors as one of the key topics in Internet that deserves a great deal of attention . According to , one of the most exciting and successful uses of this revolutionary technology may be the Internet's role in building customer loyalty and maximizing sales to your existing customers. Loyal customers are definitely important as they contribute to the profitability of the service providers . They visit a website more frequently than a newly acquired customer and can be served at a reduced operating cost. They provide free word-of-mouth advertising to gain new users. Concerning e-loyalty, observed that contrary to current beliefs that price does not rule the Web but trust does. According to the authors, referrals are extremely important in e-

services and may count for half of the acquired customers for some services. Furthermore, referred customers were found to ask for advice and guidance from the loyal customers who recommended the service to them, thus reducing the company's costs for providing help. Loyalty has been studied from two different aspects: attitudinal and behavioural . The attitudinal dimension focus on customer feelings that induce an attachment to an organization , while the behavioural side can be understood as the frequency of visits . A behaviorally loyal customer only stays with the organization until better alternatives available . Some researchers (e. g., Day, 1969; Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978) have suggested that a behavioural definition is insufficient because it does not distinguish between true loyalty and spurious loyalty that may result, for example, from a lack of available alternatives for the consumer and from a focus on public-related websites like portals and search engines. Engel and Blackwell (1982) defined brand loyalty as ' the preferential, attitudinal and behavioural response toward one or more brands in a product category expressed over a period of time by a consumer'. Jacoby (1971) expressed the view that loyalty is a biased behavioural usage process that results from a psychological process. According to Assael (1992), brand loyalty is a favourable attitude toward a brand, resulting in consistent usage of the brand over time. This rationale was also supported by Keller (1993), who suggested that loyalty is present when favourable attitudes for a brand are manifested in repeat behaviour. In this study, we only focus on attitudinal side as it means the customers has some attachment to the organization and is not easily changed . conceptualized four levels of loyalty including cognitive, affective, cognitive, and action.

When Oliver's four levels are applied to a customer's purchasing behavior on a website, an online customer has a preference (cognitive phase) to alternative websites and can develop positive attitudes (affective phase) toward the website. For the cognitive level, the consumer is expected to revisit the website and find the most favored product available, but not necessarily engage in purchasing behavior. Finally, the highest level of loyalty occurs at the action phase, where the customer is ready to revisit the website and purchases the product online. Oliver argued that to create customer loyalty, a company needs to meet and exceed customer needs better than any known competitors. defined e-loyalty as " the customer's favorable attitude toward an electronic business resulting in repeat buying behavior" (p. 125). In addition, e-loyalty refers to a consumer's intention to buy from a website (Flavian et al., 2006) or intention to revisit to a website (Cyr, Bonanni, Bowes, & Ilsever, 2005). In this study, e-loyalty to a sport website was defined as a sport consumer's intention to revisit a sport website and contains both the cognitive phase and the action phase of Oliver's (1999) conceptualization. E-loyalty is considered an important construct because it positively influences long-term profitability (Ribbink, Van Riel, Liljander, & Streukens, 2004) and word-of-mouth referrals (Van Riel et al., 2001). Referrals are crucial in online business, with referred customers often seeking advice from loyal customers (Reichheld & Scheffer, 2000; Van Riel et al., 2001). Many scholars have investigated the antecedents to, and consequences of, e-loyalty (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003; Semeijin, Van Riel, Van Birgelen, & Streukens, 2005). These factors can be operationalized as various services provided by a sport website. Loyalty toward a website may

therefore be cultivated and strengthened as online consumers repetitively use various quality functions and services offered by the website (Reichheld & Scheffer, 2000). Identifying and understanding these various predictors of e-loyalty can help a website succeed in a fierce online business environment (Chiou, 2004).

## **SATISFACTION - LOYALTY**

A product or service's success is always determined by the quality of the customer experience. Thus, it is essential to achieve satisfied website experiences to generate revisit. Klenke (1992) emphasized the importance of understanding consumer satisfaction, since it is associated with other crucial constructs such as loyalty in the context of information systems design. Customer loyalty has a positive influence on the profitability and revenue of a company. The literature on the role of satisfaction in loyalty largely examined that the former is a main determinant of the latter. It shows that satisfaction is one of the most critical factors, not only in perceived quality, but also in loyalty intentions. As mentioned by [author], the ability to keep customers is related to the intensity of customer satisfaction. [author], in a study of healthcare web sites, indicated that trust is the main antecedent of satisfaction and loyalty to the health web site is satisfaction-driven. [author] conducted an investigation in the banking industry where they studied the effect of service personalization on loyalty. They said that the effect of service personalization on loyalty exists, but that the effect is not direct at all. Personalization works by improving service satisfaction and trust. In other work focusing on examining the antecedents of consumer loyalty

toward internet portals, stated that consumers' specific asset investment on an internet portal exerted a positive impact on loyalty intention, whereas perceived opportunism toward an internet portal exerted a negative influence on loyalty intention. On other hand, Ribbink et al. (2004), carried out a study where e-trust was found to affect directly loyalty. In this paper, the e-service quality dimension influences loyalty via e-trust and e-satisfaction. Other e-quality dimensions, such as ease of use, e-escape, responsiveness, and customization influence e-loyalty mainly indirectly, via satisfaction., demonstrated in their investigation, that although e-satisfaction has an impact on e-loyalty, this relationship is moderated by consumers' individual level factors and firms' business level factors. Among consumer level factors, " convenience motivation" and " purchase size" were found to accentuate the impact of e-satisfaction on e-loyalty, whereas " inertia" suppresses the impact of e-satisfaction on e-loyalty. Regarding business level factors, both " trust" and " perceived value", developed by the company, significantly accentuates the impact of e-satisfaction on e-loyalty. Lastly, it should be noted that Tam (2003) proposes a model that explains online consumer loyalty where factors such as web design, security and privacy and customer service have a huge influence on loyalty. Concerning ONSs, the concept of loyalty is used in the sense of customer loyalty, which has been defined as a pattern of repeat visits . Loyalty may incorporate aspects of customer satisfaction, trust and a sense of shared values with a websites . However, these are separate constructs because customers will not necessarily be loyal just because they are satisfied or share values with a business . Therefore, loyalty is defined as including the implicit feelings of



trust and shared values, but to be driven by a desire to return to a news website. Satisfaction with the news website is conceptualized separately by measuring how useful and enjoyable users find the news website and whether they see the site as high quality. These concepts have been found to lead to customer loyalty through return visit. (Lee, Jungwon; Kim, Jinwoo; Moon, Jae 2000)By improving product and service attributes, customer satisfaction should increase. Increased customer satisfaction is expected to lead to greater customer retention. Improved customer retention leads to greater profitability. There is mounting evidence that the links in the satisfaction-profit chain are solid. Firms that do manage to create superior customer satisfaction enjoy commensurate profits (Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann 1994; Anderson, Fornell and Rust 1997). 40. Source: Personalizing News Websites Attracts Young ReadersLee, Jungwon; Kim, Jinwoo; Moon, Jae (Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on human factors in computing systems, 04/2000, CHI '00, ISBN 1581132166, pp. 305 - 312

## **E-Satisfaction and E-Loyalty**

Although both the e-satisfaction and e-loyalty constructs are commonly measured outcomes of postconsumption behavior in e-business, the loyalty construct is quite different from satisfaction. In particular, loyal consumers show strong emotional attachment and behavioral commitment toward an organization and its website regardless of their satisfaction level or any other situational influences. Satisfaction is an outcome and an evaluative process, which contributes to the development of consumer loyalty. Prior research has found a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty .

For example, in the offline context, customer satisfaction has been found to directly affect customer loyalty (Ping, 1993). Similarly, confirmed that satisfaction positively and directly influences loyalty in the online business. More recent studies also supported this positive relationship between e-satisfaction and e-loyalty . According to , customer satisfaction is highly related to future purchase intentions. also explored the relationship between (1) e-satisfaction and customers' stated purchasing behavior and (2) actual browsing behavior. Furthermore, they found that e-satisfaction influences behavioral outcomes such as website visits, time spent on the website, and number of pages viewed. It has been proposed that the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty is much stronger for online than offline consumers . It is therefore proposed: H3. E-satisfaction positively influences sport fans' e-loyalty.