Legitimizing e-social capital cues' integration:
Investigating the multiple paths of resistance among web site designers

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Abstract

Objectives

Web site design is often portrayed as a key tool in attracting customers and in providing sustainable competitive advantage to e-firm (Dailey 2004; Eroglu, Machleit, and Davis 2001). While most of the e-marketing research has tended to concentrate on deterministic aspects of websites such as navigation, search, payment convenience and generic atmospherics like colors, designers' resistance and lack of explicit legitimacy for the inclusion of social cues seem to be present (deKervenoael et al, 2009). Yet, the importance of effectively dealing with socially oriented design variables and social capital has been proven to naturally increase international market share as demonstrated by several studies (Constantinides, 2004; Klein, 2003) and reflected in the success of social networking sites. In this context, our paper analyses: how web designers through their daily practices, adopt recursive, adaptive and resisting behavior regarding the inclusion of social cues online and shape the socio-technical power relationship between designers and clients.

Methods

We explore qualitatively three types of emerging resistance namely: market driven resistance, ideological resistance and functional resistance Vignettes through a think aloud techniques are used (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Preissle et al, 1997) and follow Yin (1994) pattern matching strategy. The findings and analysis proceed concurrently with theorizing.

Findings

The vignettes demonstrate that designers' social context is important in shaping web site design. The findings point out at multiples paths of resistance not to include social capital. In turn, most type of resistance are legitimized through external and technical variables rather than implicating directly the web designer. Towards this end, we develop a series of propositions providing a novel contribution to existing theory on the social impact of e-technologies.

Conclusion

The study allows further understanding of web designers' impact in shaping the current e-development tools such as Web 3.0, also named the semantic web or smart web, which includes advanced social capital features socially grounded within consumers' day to day environment and practices. We argue that further social skills ought to be acquired by web designers and explicitly made visible in their design. These in turn, will create sustainable differentiation strategies in the profession creating a two tier market whereby some designers are able to provide inimitable value added services within specific markets while other only provide basic technical services.

Keywords: e-social capital, web site designer, resistance.

Introduction

Web site design is often portrayed as a key tool in attracting customers and in providing sustainable competitive advantage to e-firm (Dailey 2004; Eroglu, Machleit, and Davis 2001). While most of the e-marketing research has tended to concentrate on deterministic aspects of websites such as navigation, search, payment convenience and generic atmospherics like colors, designers' resistance and lack of explicit legitimacy for such inclusion seem to be present regarding when investigating the display of social cues online (deKervenoael et al, 2009). Yet, the importance of effectively dealing with socially oriented design variables and social capital has been proven to naturally increase international market share as demonstrated by several studies (Constantinides, 2004; Klein, 2003). Nevertheless, this broad literature pays only limited attention to the legitimacy and resistance facing web designers regarding social capital and social network cue inclusion and integration. In particular, social acoustic legitimacy as a multi-dimensional concept ought to be established by all stakeholders groups prior to designing other more functional website drivers.

This paper draws on a number of literature streams, namely organizational development, strategic management, innovation studies, development studies, and evolutionary theory of the firm (Marcelle 2004)[1]. Setting aside the methods and models of management science, we apply a practice perspective (Jarzabkowski et al. 2007) and come closer to everyday life of web designers. Strategy as practice utilizes three interrelated concepts (i) practitioners investigating what people do individually or in group, (ii) practices which represent the large array of tools

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[1] Marcelle, 2004 page 26 Table 2.1: Key texts on organisational learning and technological capability building, provides a detailed examination and literature review of these theories providing insight in the case of emerging market on firms how firms operating in an age when generic technologies and paradigm changing technologies are pervasive, should go about technological learning and successful product/process innovation.

and mechanisms used to implement day to day strategy and (iii) praxis representing the stream of activities (Whittington, 2007; Palmer & O'Kane, 2007; Jarzabroski et al, 2007). We listen to practitioners in their accomplishment and resistance to the inclusion of social cues and coping strategies.

This paper argues that it is imperative for web designers to learn about the contested nature of social capital development online, and in particular, the potential role of web designers in shaping the inclusion process before benefiting (or not) from other stakeholders such as clients and customers inputs. The current economic downturn we contend has accentuated the need for such contribution to sustainable differentiate websites and web designers. In this context, our paper analyses: how web designers through their daily practices, adopt recursive, adaptive and resisting behavior regarding the inclusion of social cues online and shape the socio-technical power relationship between designers and clients.

While social cues and capital are embedded in the offline retail setting and have benefited from centuries of refinement, fashions and trends offering a rich array of cues, displays, signals and reminders the online environment, increasingly so in the current mass retail sites, invariably reveals a lack of explicit socio-cultural capital. The scale and scope of these potential inclusions thus offers the potential for more complex theoretical insights.

To frame how resistance and legitimacy are conceptualized in the literature, the following section begins by providing a definition of resistance, followed with a discussion of the concept of legitimacy. The methodology is then outlined with a discussion of the findings, emerging theoretical contributions and conclusions.

Literature review

Resistance

Resistance across history has remained a powerful symbol of human territoriality. In turn, territoriality is often described as the primary expression of social power (Sack, 1986). Resistance is subsequently linked to the possibility of territorial changes, power shifts and responsibility evolutions occurring. Territoriality involves some form of classification or assigning tasks to a category affecting ongoing relationships. Territoriality displaces attention within relationships as a mean to reifying power and creates de-facto boundaries among territorial units. Examples include expression such "ours" and not "yours" and "it is the local regulation", "you may not do this there". In particular the scope of knowledge is often graded according to different territorial spaces leading to a scale regarding the scope of responsibilities. The span of control of any individual stakeholders is then molded to a great level of details.

Resistance research has long recognized that technology related product and services face problem situations on a daily basis. Much existing resistance literature has tended to concentrate on a limited number of areas including: engagement and diffusion (Rogers, 1995), trust (dekervenoael and Aykac, 2008), service experience (Ling, 2008), and skills for adopters (Marcelle, 2004). Concurrently, from within social science resistance has been analyzed in various settings including: political resistance (Watts, 1997), power resistance (Moore, 1997), identity resistance (Banister & Hogg, 2004), managerial (Lee & Cadogan, 2009), consumption resistance (Clarke et al, 2006), space of resistance, regulatory resistance and cultural resistance (Kozinets and Handelman, 2004).

Sheth (1981) developed and presented a typology of innovation resistance, which included the concept of 'Habit Resistance'. This stream of work was often linked to Mittelsteadt et al.'s (1976) symbolic adoption or rejection model whereby users may have (i) symbolically rejected an innovation, (ii) accepted but were not able to try and (iii) accepted but decided to postpone trial. Reflecting this, Gatignon and Robertson (1991) suggested that non-adoption of an innovation may be explained by either rejection or postponement depending on the context. Context again is strongly related to the characteristics of territoriality. Context for our purpose is defined as "the set of environmental states and settings that either determines an application's behavior or in which an application event occurs and is interesting to the user" (Chen & Kotz, 2000). Building on the general principles outlined above, Szmigin and Foxall (1998) have categorized innovation resistance into three varieties: rejection, postponement and opposition.

Concurrently, in the strategic alliance literature, resistance is also characterized by Collinson (1994, p49) as a behavior requesting to "challenge, disrupt or invert prevailing assumptions, discourses and power relations. It can take multiple material and symbolic forms, and its strength, influence and intensity are likely to be variable and to shift over time…". In other words following from Palmer et al (2010, p9), and drawing on the work of Ackroyd and Thompson (1999), and Fleming and Spicer (2007), four main expressions of resistance are emerging including: refusal, voice, escape and creation:

> Resistance as *refusal* does not follow instruction and overtly blocks the effects of power by undermining the flow of domination rather than attempting to change it. Resistance as *voice* is to let one be heard by those in control in order to change particular aspects of power relations in favor of those being affected by them. Resistance as *escape* reflects those mechanisms used to disengage mentally from the workplace such as cynicism, skepticism and misidentification. Resistance as *creation* refers to the way that alternative identities and discursive systems of representation emerge within the broader flows of domination (Fleming & Spicer, 2007: paraphrased from pages 29-43, emphasis added).

From a technological perspective, the four expression of resistance can be related to the power and relationships among the stakeholders. In the dynamic setting of the online

environment, identities, responsibilities, actions and inactions are mediated by the virtual 24/7 aspect of the channel. Refusal as an example can be said to reflect the inabilities of certain stakeholders to engage with tasks beyond the technical aspects of the channel whereby only few stakeholders really understand the potential and pitfall of new tools and software. Interestingly, the idea of personalization seems to be understood with the greatest variation. Voice, from a resistance perspective can arise (or be stopped) from multiple outlets including: email, blogs, social network sites, second life, video clips among others. The multiplicity of outlets points at various paths and level of possible voicing of issues often categorized as personal or impersonal. Escape allows within any design the voluntary creation of bugs, anomalies that may be corrected in the future. The example of video games, where users share tips to progress, is often voluntarily integrated by the designers. Lastly, creation allows designers to test new concepts and tools while getting instant feedback and growing their area of knowledge and expertise. The online environment allows testing under very specific conditions limited to certain users for example early adopters, mavens and experts. Each aspect also allows resistance mechanism to be deployed by designers.

Importantly, one regular debate among researcher rests on the divergence connecting resistance motivated by personal motivations (internally driven) and motivated by societal and ideological factors (externally driven). For instance, institutional theory is often drawn upon to investigate how institutional framework shape organization's configuration, behavior and action (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Studies tend to portray resistance as barriers and a negative bipolarization of the environment whereby many stakeholders are considered as non-participant undermining the implementation aspects and practices in day to day activities (Knights and McCabe, 2000). In particular, obstacles and resistance are often portrayed as fixed limits and detached from a dynamic environment of ongoing activities (Palmer et al, 2010). The most challenging aspect of many resistance acts are often the fact that they remain indirect, underground, underlying the importance of other factors in the decision making process (Prasad and Prasad, 2000).

Other strands of research such as economic geographers have also contributed to the resistance literature connecting it to space and geographies. More precisely, they underline that stakeholders are positioned differently leading to "unequal and multiples power relationships, that more or less powerful people are active in the constitution of unfolding relationships of authority, meaning and identity, that these activities are contingent, ambiguous and awkwardly situated, but that resistance seeks to occupy, deploy and create alternative spatiality from those defined through oppression and exploitation" (Pile & Keith, 1997 p.3).

In this context resistance is depicted as "looking at a spatiality of resistance understood in terms of those defined by structural power relations, second by thinking about ways in which spaces of resistance are distinct from spaces of domination; finally,[…] by suggesting that resistance may involve spatiality that lie beyond 'power'" (Pile & Keith, 1997 p5). A particularly notable feature is that stakeholders appearing in similar situations to re-interpret the context on which resistance takes place are arriving at divergent conclusions. In other words, spaces of resistance can be said to be dislocated from the traditional sources of power. In particular, spaces can be visible but are often constituted of hidden and ulterior motives showing the arbitrary of practices.

Resistance is then described by Haynes and Prakash (1991, p3) as "those behaviors and cultural practices by subordinates groups that contest hegemonic social formation, that threaten to unravel the strategies of domination. Consciousness need not be essential to its construction". Resistance as contestation is situated "betwixt and between the structural certainties of any fixed binary, such as a perspective explore the continuous play of history, culture and power" (Hall, 1990, p 225). Consequently, a different relation to power is required that is transitory, flexible and ambivalent tracking previously lock-in conflicts (Bhabha, 1990; Law, 1997).

A contrasting approach is presented by research concerned with anti-choice behaviors as a positive expression of voluntary anti-consumption. This area of research suggests that grounds for resistance are arising from (a) simplifying decision mechanism (Shaw & Newholm, 2002; Hogg & Michell, 1996); (b) prioritization of better options (Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002, Piacentini & Banister, 2009); (c) resistance as a reflection of hidden intention including ethical concerns and environmental principles (Shaw & Newholm, 2002; Iyer & Muncy, 2009; Gabriel, 1999; Knights & McCabe, 2000; Prasad & Prasad, 2000). These types of resistances are also portrayed as moral avoidance (Lee et al., 2009 a,b); and (d) resistance as a coping mechanism (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

A central assumption to resistance related specifically to ICT lies in the fact that ICT brings its own novel ritual, myths, values and basic conjectures (Schein, 2004). Web designers' local day to day context and histories with previous ICT projects can be said to also have shaped opinions and attitudes towards future inclusion or not of social cues. Decisions regarding designs are usually a tradeoff between increased efficiency and convenience on the one side and decreased personal control over work practice and multitasking expectations on the other side (Castells, 2001; Giddens, 1991; 1992). That said, the prospect of economic gain or cost savings ought also to greatly affect the likelihood of social capital inclusion. Furthermore, from a marketing perspective the signature tag of the designer ought to increase future prospect. The

risk of social capital inclusion may, currently, be perceived as too high as the vast majority of web designers are expected to be pragmatic and more concerned with new technological tools.

The concept of consideration then becomes relevant as a basis for understanding the contested interactions between stakeholders. Consideration is understood as Ettlinger (2003) as "*Why do people [...] often make decision that result in suboptimal productivity, competitiveness or effectiveness?*". Many new technologies and practices will then ultimately remain only under consideration but will never be engaged with. A threshold period is *de-facto* imposed upon user whereas the future intention to use is considered. In other words, stakeholders need to evaluate the legitimacy of the results of the consideration exercise. We now turn to the concept of legitimacy.

Legitimacy

Rather than considering legitimacy as a unified framework, it is probably more accurate to describe it in terms of a number of concepts which share certain assumptions. Legitimacy concepts are present in various theoretical areas including transaction cost theory (Barney and Hesterly, 1996; Ireland et al, 2002); resource based view theory (Chung et al, 2000; Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven, 1996); organizational learning theory (Kale et al, 2000; Khanna et al, 1998); social network theory (Ahuja, 2000; Gulati, 1999; Kenis and Knoke, 2002) and ICT capacity building theory (Burkink, 2002). Legitimacy for our purpose is defined as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (Suchman, 1995, p. 574).

Various dimension of legitimacy are analyzed in the literature including: link to loyalty (Tyler, 1990), authority (Courpasson, 2000), resource management (Hearit, 1995), stigmatization as the opposite of legitimate (Elsbach, 2003). Territoriality and spaces are also at the center of the legitimacy concept as "society derives meanings from place and the place is defined in terms of social and physical relationships" (Sack, 1986 p. 63). Consequently, legitimacy needs to be depicted in a dynamic context following events and history. In turn, legitimacy is also linked with the concept of logic that refers to the broad cultural beliefs and rules that structure cognition and fundamentally shapes decision-making and action in a field (Thornton, 2002; 2004). Furthermore, trust in the legitimacy of the taken decisions needs to be established for action to be taken within day to day activities. Trust is defined for our purpose as: 'the extent to which a person is confident in and willing to act on the basis of, the words, actions, and decisions of another' (McAllister, 1995 p.25).

Importantly, the concept of legitimacy has been widely used in the setting of strategic alliance where more direct comparison can be made with our particular study. Dacin et al, (2007) describe five main types of legitimacy namely: market, relational, social investment and alliance that are of particular relevance. Market legitimacy represents the rights and qualification to conduct business. In our case, web designers educations, set of skills beyond their technical capabilities and experiences of the social capital as individual becomes relevant. Past reputation in developing websites with specific attributes, singular character traits and ability to link these novel characteristics to abnormal success are important. Future contracts are in effect dependent on past performance. Relational legitimacy represents the competition for attractive partners. In our context, a series of variable can be taken into account such as the dependency of clients to certain technologies and tools may be relevant in the choice of designers (soft lock-ins), future strategy and potential new ties to be created and the extend of the actionable social network. Social legitimacy is portrayed as the conformity of a firm in the case of alliance to comply with social rules and expectations. Compliance with expected behaviors insures respectability and enhance image. Investment legitimacy is regarded as the worthiness of the business activity. Partners support and confidence is deemed important allowing future endorsement. Lastly, alliance legitimacy validates the appropriateness of the strategy and acceptance by the wider group of stakeholders within the environment.

A number of observations can be made regarding the aforementioned literatures. Resistance and legitimacy are often concerned with the macro level rather than day to day practices. This is perhaps inevitable given the difficulty to track individual down on a large scale. Yet, resistances can be more mundane. Do web designers engage with their client regarding the inclusion of social capital? Do web designers voluntarily restrict their activities to the technical side of web design using rigid contract as tools? Do web designers consider that it is beyond their obligations to be in tune with the social environment? How would/could they cope with the process of shaping the debate on social capital inclusion? It is to these questions that the study now turns.

Methodology

In order to address these questions, five web designers, experts, who worked in leading companies (such as Seesmic) and various countries i.e. USA, France, Israel, China and Turkey, were recruited and ask through a 60 to 120 minutes semi-structured phone interview their perception on the possible resistance to social cues inclusion and the legitimacy for (or not) including such cues (see Table 1 for profile). A general definition of social capital and social cues, described as the sum of web experiences' elements including for example aesthetics,

association to users' life- styles' symbols including norms, art, posture, gender, politics, religious, environmental, personal, cultural grounded reference points was provided to each respondent to situate the context.

The first set of questions intended to define the general context and understanding of each respondent within his day to day activities. A definition of the difference between web designers and web developers was asked as an entry point. The second set of questions was aimed at identifying and classifying different types of possible social capital cues currently present in web design ranging from basic demographics including age and gender to fashion and trends. Each item was related to the respondent in term of his own differentiation with other web stakeholders regarding the inclusion and ownership of social cues in his work. The rational or lack of it for inserting explicitly authorship and social cue was subsequently investigated. Lastly, the semi-structured interviews involved questions around the representation of social capital online, risk and technological issues.

Vignettes through a think aloud techniques were used for each participant (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Preissle et al, 1997) and follow Yin (1994) pattern matching strategy. The findings and analysis proceed concurrently with theorizing, with each vignette having an impact of the procession of others (Merriam, 1998). First, all interviewed were transcribed and translated in English if necessary. Second, each interview was analyzed separately as soon as it was conducted. Analysis of early interviews allowed later interviews to benefit from the preliminary insights into the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The data were then analyzed as a whole. A peer evaluation of coding among authors was used whereby each emerging theme was discussed in depth in an iterative spiral process (Flint and Woodruff, 2001). The interviews were guided by concepts and characteristics which emerge from the literature and design to explore participant personal practices and experiences observed across the course of their career. Designers were asked about day to day tasks and activities and their general opinion of the industry. The findings were then re-interpreted in view of the theoretical background with a focus on flexibility and context. Variance among respondents, evolution and dependence on one another was sought. A matrix based data display was design allowing within and between case similarities to appear (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Constant themes, idiosyncratic situations and linkages between variables were made explicit. The findings presented here remain exploratory and form the pilot of a wider study to be conducted. The letter after each quote identifies which respondent opinion the quote is derived from.

Findings and discussion

Market driven resistance

The findings first uphold the general differentiation between web designers and web developers. Typically the respondents described each in the following way:

> *"A web designer makes the graphic and the ergonomic. A web developer makes the code".*
> *JP*
> *"A web designer is in charge of the artistic side while the web developer is in charge of programming". C*

Interestingly, also the differences were clear on paper, it was more difficult for each individual to classify themselves in a given category. Most of them were now managers or middle management and had to migrate from one to the other. It was underlined that a current migration to the new mobile environment was increasing the complexity and territoriality of the job description. While the typical skills required to design m-applications are the same, a new level of involvedness is required both to fit with the different audiences and the scale and scope of the new devices in people lifestyle.

Analysis suggested then that a clearer classification was present between retail sites and entertainment sites. The purpose of a visit was described as opposite with a polarization between efficiency and experiential. For all our respondents, commercial web sites do not aim at inspiring people but are designed just to make them buy.

> *"If you make people think too much they buy less. Non commercial or NGOs web site for example can have this goal". JP*
> *"the customers just focus on the product and services". Y*

In particular, it was noticed that a certain resistance emerged regarding site as a whole. Sites were described as compartmented, one page for loyalty actions, one page for feedback, one page for promotion among others. When probing about social capital characteristics such as inspiration, surprise and excitement, were perceived to be applicable to only few sites and not the primary responsibility of designers. Designers were very pragmatic in style. For example, one exception could be:

> *"If the product is an innovative one, we can try to surprise people to emphasize the innovation". JP*

Personality factors such as neuroticism and extraversion recognized in other study as important (Lee and Cadogan, 2008) was described as low. A status quo situation was described to have emerged over the year, the internet was created in 1993 quoted one respondent, whereby leaders such as Microsoft, SUN, Apple, IBM creates a frame of mind that most designers emulate. It was described as softening the styles variations among web designers. As a legitimating rational, the litigation society from which the Internet has emerged, namely the US was given as a reason not to include any items that may lead to copyright infringement or general lawsuit by specific subgroups within the society.

"We need to follow some standards it is hard to deviate. Clients are very scared to be sued". Y
"I follow the leaders such as Apple". S
"We aim at being different by making the simplest and easiest of use; follow the model, herd mentality". G

However, change was not described as prescribed. The information volume and its speed of exchange are seamless and growing extremely rapidly. Following the trend of Twitter and Facebook, and social networking in general, clients were now asking about possible connections to that type of communication or about the source of these successes. The foundation of these site successes and differentiation was described as a combination of open source environment, co-creation of information followed by social capital or experiential web surfing practices whereby personal information is displayed over multiple media. Allusions were made to second life but the site was classified as entertainment. Other sites such as city recommendation for art, culture and gastronomy activities (e.g. Yelp.com) were also mentioned.

"We and some clients encourage the development of social network cues as it is trendy". G

Importantly, unlike Facebook where users can lead easily content development, on a commercial web site, online forums are more complicated as they need to be rigorously controlled. Co-creation is virtually not possible.

"In general they are impossible to deal with because of the variety of issues discussed overall control and in particular legal issues are omnipresent". Y

Interestingly, according to the legislation of some countries a web designer name or logo was not permitted as a mark of signature and recognition (e.g. in France). If the client allows it, the logo of the company is put as the only mark of creation. Clients were described as retaining full control of their site and only sub-contracting what was described as a technical service outsourcing. As a consequence for many project web designers roughly do the same type of work and improve subsequent to web analytic results. Price is the main differentiating factor as well as timing taking into account the clients and technological constraints.

"We all do the same i.e. web 2.0. The logo reflects the client color choice and brand management. This is widely inspired by the Apple". JP
"Five years ago most of web sites were following what was created in USA. The cultural cues spread were then American ones. Nowadays, as the world goes global, they are more social cues to choose from included in websites". G

The vignettes demonstrate that designers' social ties impact is low in shaping web site design. Drawing from this discussion, we present the following propositions:

P1: Resistance to communicate further about the detail of social capital among stakeholders is preventing the shaping of social capital cues within web sites design.

P2: Globalization will decrease resistance to change with the inclusion within the design of sites of multiple cultural cues.

Ideological resistance and legitimacy

In the second phase of the semi-structured interviews, we explored the reasons which legitimate the lack of inclusion of social capital in web sites as well as the resistances behind it. The web sites were described as minimalists, efficient selling machines and process oriented. The logic behind such situation was grounded in the possible multiple threats coming from law infringement, competitors and boycott from customers. In addition, it was explains that the socio-political context of a given location was important to take into account example of the USA was obvious but also China and Malaysia.

> *"A web site is a 24 hours open window on the world. Hence, you have to be careful to reactions from competitors and e-visitors". G*
> *"In certain countries, social opinions are not permitted or accepted, the personal/physical risk will be too high". S*
> *"Our clients do not want to deal with socio-political issues". G*

Likewise, gender symbols are rarely included. It was described as a sensitive topic for various reasons including: (i) which symbolic representation to use, (ii) any religious connections, (iii) the place of women in many societies was portrayed as still not clear, (iv) a question was raised on what will be the direct impact on sale? Significantly, it was underlined that web sites are done for mass audiences. For example, newsletters are built for all, current and future users. Cost was also mentioned as a rapidly emerging hindrance. In particular, personalization was portrayed as difficult to implement as site become messy or a patchwork of many styles. The only exception given concerns the creation of a blog.

> *"If the product is for one gender, we can include some gender symbols, mainly photographs. But, in general we do not include them as a specific design aim". S*
> *"Cost may increase quickly and may become too high rapidly compared to return – cost vs benefit". S*
> *"It becomes a mess very quickly and the web designer is made responsible for other lack of proportion". S*

Interestingly, web designers agreed on the fact that personalization is often understood from a supply chain perspective not a user perspective. As such personalization examples were reflected through new web technologies that were employed or not by designers. Products such Ajax (shorthand for asynchronous JavaScript and XML) allowing more interactive sites were described as fashion items. Other sources of inspiration, trend and fashion were again described from a technical deterministic perspective including technology forums and fairs. Moreover, clients were portrayed as not asking specific questions about trend of fashion underlying weaknesses and myopia towards basic sites.

> *"The fashion is launched by some companies which launch new technologies (e.g AJAX allows specific transparency and sharpness on given page)". C*
> *"Web designers get inspire from some research centers of companies, start up. Thereafter, they follow the trend". JP*
> *"In general the clients are not interested in; just some multinational does it a bit". G*

P3: The re-shaping of resistance towards the allocation of responsibility for content provision is an important step in allowing the inclusion of social capital cues.

P4: The re-shaping of resistance towards the explicit inclusion demographic cues is an important step towards e-social capital development and web site differentiation.

Functional legitimacy and resistance

Our respondents described that the main reason for the lack of social cues was the result of long established process driven mechanisms. Resistance to social inclusion appeared at various levels: (i) the resistance to include wider social science subject within the education system of technology related topics, (ii) the resistance to alter organizational culture and obligations of many firms, (iii) the resistance to bridge the gap between design and implementation of specific cues or conformism to basic structures and rules of design, (iv) basic technological resistance regarding compatibility issues.

Regarding education all our respondents do come from different systems in different countries but all systems were described as resisting the inclusion of softer social science topics. Another key characteristic was also portrayed as the lack of female within the student corps as well as teaching faculties. Web design was also described to be taught traditionally in Engineering school that do not always support other faculties such as visual art, sociology and management. Education was depicted as traditional and non interactive with little contact with the outside world.

> *"There is a lack of education within web designers. Most of the time we are self-educated and just focus on the technology". G*
> *"Marketing aspects are rarely taken into account in the education of web designers". JP*

P5: There is an inverted U-shaped relationship between resistance to include softer social sciences subject in web designer education and the inclusion of social capital cues.

As a second legitimating reason for resisting inclusions of social cue, the client organizational culture was put forwards. Web designers expressed great difficulties in communicating with their clients. Organizational culture regarding online marketing was explained not to have evolved sufficiently. The e-channel was portrayed as the solution to deeper issues without any fundamental evidences making the designer responsible for failure. The vision for online activities was exposed as unclear and lacking in details. Firms by nature are not concerned primarily by art and aesthetics. Functional decision making process is lacking on who in the company have the skills and powers to accept or reject social cue inclusion.

> *"It is not very difficult to include social cues but companies' contacts are not often interested. They just spread macro-information". G*
> *"Companies have little interest in artistic representation; this is the cold business world and efficiency". S*

"Clients are too powerful and communication as a two way is difficult they are not listening and often do not have the required education to understand the technical implication of choice". S

Furthermore, designers and clients contact were not in a position to bridge the gap between design and implementation of change responsibilities. Follow the model and herd mentality was a key element to obtain further projects. It was recognized that creative work cannot be taught hence requiring more time and resources. An ad-hoc mentality was expressed whereby basic structure are put in place and corrected later if required.

"Web designers just look at what is done. Thus, they copy each other". G
"Before making a web site, you need to make a market research. Although it has a cost, the fee you receive for such initiatives do not reflect the effort". JP
"You make a site, then you use Google analytic then you adapt rather than trying to foresee who will come". S

P6: Clients' resistance to alter design process increases the likelihood for ad-hoc corrections rather than proactive inclusion of social cues.

Lastly, it appeared that technology was still providing a large array of technical constraints including the use of multiple browsers (e.g. Internet Explorer, safari, Mozilla), multiple programming language options, the inclusion of audio and video and the requirement to use related software.

"The browsers do not allow you to do the same things and stuff have to be compatible". C
"As the trend is to use flash to make a web site, your clients want you to use it". G

P7: Resistance to technological compatibility increases complexity and decreases variety of design and social cues inclusion.

Conclusions

The research finding must be read in the light of the study limitation. The data are qualitative and do not lend themselves to formal conclusions. The small size of the sample of expert has, however, allowed us to gain a rich and detailed insight into a generally under-explored area of web site design linked to power resistance and territoriality among the various stakeholders. As a result, web site designers and developers as well as clients can use directly our findings, since they provide a useful framework to shape web design manifestations in practice, at an early stage of communication. Furthermore, our finding ought to encourage web designers' awareness on the various levels of resistances found and the interplay of traditional functional barriers with more ideological difficulties. By highlighting the various sub-factors linking practice to resistance, we alert web design's stakeholders to the importance of reflecting on and purposefully shaping future inclusion of social capital. Following Pile and Keith (1997)

"Resistance is less about particular acts, than about the desire to find a place in a power-geography where space is denied, circumscribed and or totally administered" (p15).

Our findings indicate that three main type of resistance may support web designers' limited inclusion of social capital. First, market driven resistance defined as the degree to which efficiency and financial requirements, on a continuum depending of the site type ranging from pure retail to entertainment, impact the range and intensity of possible actions. Second, ideological-territorial resistance is exposed, defined as the sum and limits of the power and communication relationship with other stakeholders. Third, functional resistance, understood as the degree to which mainly external environmental factors are restricting possible engagement with social capital cue are unpacked. While characteristics of these and comparable concerns have emerged in prior retail literature, our conceptualization of these within a resistance framework when dealing with social capital online is unique. Consequently, the findings presented here provide a novel contribution to existing literature on resistance.

The findings indicate that the degree to which social capital cue could be integrated remains key. In particular, it is worth to notice that the context of web designers is having a great impact. Traditional web design occurs mainly in small firm environment, or start-up context. Designers, tend to follow the models or a particular culture such as the Microsoft school. Herd mentality and conformism are strong in the industry especially regarding programmers. Significantly, creative work requires more time, money and risk while the market is requesting efficiency and proven methods. Nevertheless, it was clearly identified that entertaining and to a certain extent education and training sites ought to contain more social capital to increase users' relevance and engagement. Social capital was also described as being the face of the company. Yet, few companies seem to be strong enough to have a clearly defined identity and strategy. Web sites were described as being mass-market and often oriented towards possible new users rather than somehow restricted to certain 'most wanted/valuable' users.

The study allows further understanding of web designers' impact in shaping the current e-development tools such as Web 3.0, also named the semantic web or smart web, which includes advanced social capital features socially grounded within consumers' day to day environment and practices. We argue that further social skills ought to be acquired by web designers and explicitly made visible in their design. These in turn, will create sustainable differentiation strategies in the profession creating a two tier market whereby some designers are able to provide inimitable value added services within specific markets while other only provide basic technical services.

Of course a topic of the nature is culturally loaded. While the global nature of the online business and globalization of technologies is occurring, an underlying aspect rising from the

findings was the hegemonic impact of the USA/ EU as both drivers of new technologies but also standards setter in key areas such as search, navigation and overall efficiency. With the exception of Japan as underlined by our respondents, US/EU standards and understanding of social capital and litigation issues are overwhelmingly shaping the limited amount of social capital cues currently available. At present, very little is known about the new type and possible long term impact of web designers that are emerging from emerging markets such as India and China. Also the overall perception from our experts was that more mechanical ground work was conducted in such location the rapid pace of the online environment may modify such strategies rapidly.

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Table 1: Respondents profile

Name	Position	Experience (year)	Education field	Companies worked for	Nationality
Yael	Web designer	15 years	Ph.D in communication design	Semcor http://www.semcor.net University of Baltimore http://www.ubalt.edu	Israeli
Christophe	Web designer	5 years	Computer engineer	Automa-tech http://www.altix-automa-tech.com Aster association http://www.aster-asso.org	French
Steve	User Interface	7 years	Computer engineer	Seesmic http://www.seesmic.com Sixapart http://www.sixapart.com	French
Jean-Paul	Web designer	13 years	Art, Applied arts	Mengine http:// www.mengine.fr Automa-tech Http://www.altix-automa-tech.com	French
Gorkem	Director and Lead Designer	12 years	Art History/Architectural Theory	Emedya http://www.emedya.net Superonline http://www.superonline.com	Turkish