

## **Data Interactivity In Social Networks As A Strategic Design. An Approach To Fair Trade**

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**Abstract.** Nowadays, the electronic means of communication have an unprecedented impact in the way of projects are developed. The electronic information –due to its nature– has now a more democratic approach of operation, plummeting the power of the great companies and governments. With the creation of the web 2.0, the common users of Internet have now a huge number of communication tools, which allow them to know –in an immediate, measured and effective way– what they or others think or believe. So, the object that has changed as a main channel is the operation by Internet. This current and simple –for many– phenomena, has a deep implication in the way of replanting the new paradigms with a global impact in productive projects as a commerce target.

### **Introduction**

Nowadays and according to Ries (2006:14) the mass communication that has been implemented in a globalized world is branded by five ‘revolutions’ that have evolved the way the information is exchanged, allowing to share ideas or opinions of any kind with speed and ease. There is a direct correlation between each one of these mass communication revolutions that have been democratized and the start of a new interaction era.

That way, such revolutions are defined by a particular mean of communication. These means are: 1) The book, which main characteristic is the information mass distribution as first communication revolution. 2) Newspapers, in which the main characteristic is the periodicity added to the mass distribution. This is the second revolution. 3) The radio broadcast, which has as characteristics the mass distribution, the immediacy and the audio. 4) Television, which adds to the previously mentioned characteristics the movement of images. 5) Finally the Internet, the fifth revolution implied a new element in the transmission of ideas: the interactivity.

### **Web as Strategic Design**

For starters, it can be argued the implications that electronic media has had since the forth revolution –television-, which nodes usually mix with those from the Internet –or fifth revolution- in some aspects. That way and in an initial approach, the ideological implications of these electronic media are discussed, so in a second approach it is possible to study their utility as strategies. As a starting point, television, as a hegemonic communication medium has displaced other media such as printed or radio by virtue of the ease it has to reach people and specially, of the digested content it offers.

As such, and as mentioned before, television is notable due the possibility of achieving realities that are not truthful, as well as transmitting them through audiovisual language games. These are a couple of the reasons of why authors say that television images are fictions or simulations that decided the characteristics of visual consumers. This characteristic is empowered by the evasion of real feedback or the lack of interactivity

The values, beliefs and concepts generated by hypertechnificated and global media, with a foundation on a particular ethos bathed in a fictional reality created ad hoc (created from the own interests of the media owners), are sensitive to the consumers' whims and expectations, distorting specific ideological doctrines and create a fragmentation of ideas, values, concepts and beliefs. However, what is possible to defend is that there is an empowering and democratization of knowledge whether it is of scientific nature or not, which in the end is the foundation of any democracy and fair trade.

Now, with base on the previous idea – bear in mind the fact that the communication model in Internet is different from the television one by virtue of the interactivity and feedback- it is possible to analyze the following model in Figure 1 (Halligan, 2010: 41):

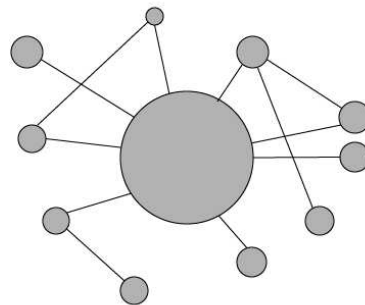


Figure 1: Internet communication model. Source: Halligan, 2010.

The center of the model is a website, preferably based in the web 2.0 which gives the ability of interactivity on many subjects to several users, such as a blog or a forum. The strategic communication in Internet happens when many users talk about a particular topic, be it a person, a book or a company from diverse sites and in Exchange, they are redirected to the place where the content's original author chooses. The spheres that surround the main one can be social networks such as Facebook, in which is possible to publish any information and redirect users to another site; a second sphere could be Twitter, in which something gets published and people can comment if they find it interesting; a third one could be an external blog that makes reference to an specific site; fourth more could the email that takes the user to where the sender decides.

Once the users reach the place of their interest or the main site author's interest, there should be communication elements in that very place, such as chats allowing emitting an opinion, the option to subscribe for continuous news, among others. That way, the more people are interested in what they can find in a website, the more possibilities of interaction exist. The combination of these factors make websites gain relevance and start getting better placements in search engines in an organic, always under the interest of the user. Thanks to this, it is possible to know the importance level of a specific blog, site or forum in specifically created sites. There are tools aimed for these kinds of practices, which allow plotting a scheme or blueprint for a particular site.

Under this perspective, it is necessary to create relevant contents of great interest for possible users with the aim of achieving a more strategic communication and with commercial ends, for two main reasons: a) The outstanding content creates links that increase the number of visits of the original site. b) The outstanding content is easy to distribute in social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, digg, among others.

The reasoning behind this choice is that the more content you give, the more you receive. This can be observed in Figure 2:

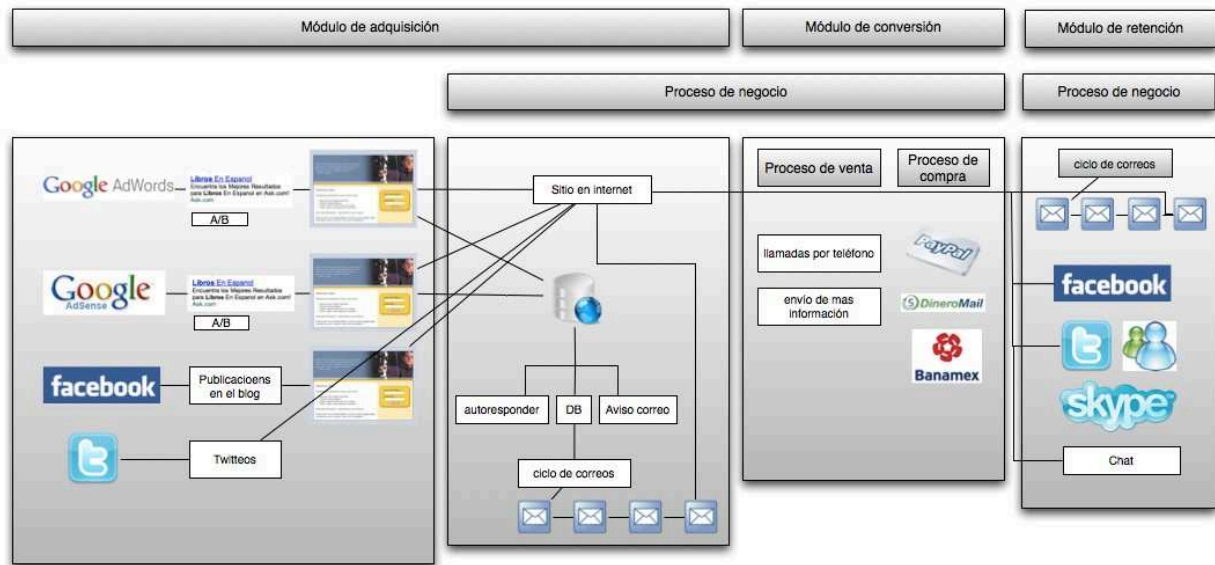


Figure 2. Example of a communication model for Internet. Source: Emiliano Moras Gómez (2011)

For this reason, the center of a strategic and effective mass communication in Internet should be a website with a blog or forum and y not a static nor only consultation site. In this sense, some tools that will allow empowering this strategic communication are:

1. Twitter, to create an effective online profile, with the following recommendations: use the same handler (be it a nickname or a given name); use a business profile; create a simple handler or user name, so people can remember it easily; do not use numbers in the user, unless they form part of the brand (as in the case of sportsmen, such as footballers, e.g. CR7 for Cristiano Ronaldo from Real Madrid FC); check that the user name can be used in all the websites; create an unique avatar, which could be a variation of a logo; create an user biography that is brief and concise, no more than two lines; create links of the social network to the chosen site; get followers from other social networks such as Facebook; eventually check the tool [twitter.gradder.com](http://twitter.gradder.com) in order to find the number of people providing feedback of the site or blog.
2. Facebook, to create a business page, which requires: add a link to the site from the personal page; promote the visit of the Facebook page in several channels; use the tool known as Facebook adds.
3. LinkedIn, which follows mainly a professional perspective. Connections have to be created in LinkedIn to find professionals that share the same interests as well as joining common interest groups.
4. YouTube as video channel, in case is needed and allows: create a YouTube channel; record meetings with clients; record interviews with opinion leaders and upload them; create tutorials.

Videos are a good way to educate users. YouTube generates an easy way to distribute videos and multimedia content. That way, once the video is uploaded, traffic towards it should be generated beyond the mere search engines of the service, such a sharing it in Facebook or posting it in a blog. It has to be mentioned that there are a few recommendations that should be observed in YouTube: make experiments, don't aim to make a perfect video but rather share the experience, don't spend money buying expensive filming equipment, plus the recent addition of publicity embedded in videos linking to specific sites.

An important point to consider, is this one suggested by Freshbooks.com, about the concept of the four "e's": Execute on Extraordinary Experiences Everyday. This fundament is essential for the user and make him/her arrive to an Internet site, in order to complete actions that were planned in a strategic way, such as watching a video, read articles, post a comment or an opinion. Finally, an Internet site that is effective has four main characteristics (Halligan, 2010:159): 1) It should be oriented to action and interaction; 2) It should be relevant for the user; 3) It should be measurable; and 4) It should be easy to use.

### Conclusion. Fair Trade

The modern world has been modified, appearing maybe as a dramatic fragmentation of a gap more and more insuperable and notorious between rich and poor. The global systems, especially in the field of communications, have promoted the establishment of social scenarios that tend to volatilize society's life structures, as claimed by Lipovesky (2004). This crisis of the start and the end of the millennium is identified by the economic, politic, social and cultural influences of developed nations over the developing ones, creating a series of conflicts in the public and private spheres of the social actors. Society, which once had commitments and attachment to its own identity has been left modified or emptied by the results of the philosophy result of the homogenization of cultures. The symbolic abandonment in which traditional cultures have been left through the petty economic interests of globalizing countries have generated, a fragmentation in the introduction of relational patterns in the otherness.

These postmodern media represent a new type of social factor that replace in a subtle way the brutal social control executed previously by the political class. In the so-called 'visual society' –due the extensive use of media, such as Internet, cell phones, MP3, MP4, television, movies, etc, as a commodity rather than what books used to be as information source- the conceptual language (abstract) is replaced by the perceptual (concise), reducing the richness of meanings, although opening the information spectrum. Nonetheless, the massive image has the quality of 'being what it seems' or 'it does what it says in the tin' for using a colloquial phrase and take it into a new level and as such become a 'true' medium as long as the receiver believes what he sees on it.

In light of this hegemonic situation, it is proposed to establish new and better suited communication strategies to help the survival of current trade forms that allow developing projects with Fair Trade as guideline. Specially making good use of these technologies without the intention of demonizing nor sublimate them, but on the contrary, using what globalization and hypertechnification have generated. We are in the middle of an information revolution much more transcendental than the Industrial Revolution at the end of the XIX century, a phenomenon that have generated new ways of communication and interaction between people all over the world, breaking politic frontiers and developing new languages. The communication model that applies in Internet is based mainly in the interaction between users or digital citizens which share any kind of information and ideologies. Creating in Internet an strategic communication model implies linking diverse communication channels that are both effective and complimentary, channels such as Youtube, Facebook, LinkedIn and Blogs, amongst others. Doing this will enable to generate tools that are both useful and democratic for everybody, as well as seeding the possibilities for a fairer trade.

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