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Jacob Zhivov

Swinburne University of Technology, jzhivov@swin.edu.au

Helana Scheepers

Swinburne University of Technology, hscheepers@swin.edu.au

Rosemary Stockdale

Swinburne University of Technology, rstockdale@swin.edu.au

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Facebook - The Final Frontier For TV Fandom: A Lurker's Perspective

Jacob Zhivov
Faculty of ICT
Swinburne University of Technology,
John Street, Hawthorn
VIC Australia 3122
Email: jzhivov@swin.edu.au

Helana Scheepers
Faculty of ICT
Swinburne University of Technology,
John Street, Hawthorn
VIC Australia 3122
Email: hscheepers@swin.edu.au

Rosemary Stockdale
Faculty of ICT
Swinburne University of Technology,
John Street, Hawthorn
VIC Australia 3122
Email: rstockdale@swin.edu.au

Abstract

The technology of Web 2.0 and especially social media has opened new avenues for creating communities online. Marketing to such communities can lead to better communication between consumers and those producing the product. By engaging communities online those who market film and television shows can use this new avenue to better communicate with their fans and build better communities. Through the study of three online fan pages on Facebook this paper observed how television and film companies are using this environment to market to their audience as well as what is working well and where improvement can be made.

Keywords

Hedonic Information Systems, Online community, social media, television fandom, Facebook

INTRODUCTION

The development of Social Media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter increase the ways in which we can interact both personally and professionally. This advancement in technology has not only opened up new avenues for communication but has also changed the way we communicate and create online communities. Through this new technology there is an opportunity to share opinions with more than just our friends; opinions can potentially be shared with all users of the Internet with easy filter and respond technology.

Hedonic Information Systems (HIS) is an emerging area in Information Systems (IS). While more utilitarian oriented IS improve efficiency and task performance, HIS change the focus to enjoyment when using the system (Van der Heijden, 2004). Facebook.com is an example of a HIS. As the leader in the social media space, facebook.com has revolutionised how online communities are formed and used. Fans of television and film productions are an example of passionate interest-sharing communities. In the world of television and filmmaking the use of social networking sites such as Facebook have considerable potential for engaging fans. Television and filmmaking is a multimillion dollar industry which relies heavily on its fans. Viewer ratings are a benchmark for evaluating a programme's success. Engaging with the fans and audience can be the difference between success and failure of a show and hence an integral part to any marketing strategy for such products. Effectively targeting an audience through the use of interactive technologies increases the ability of people to engage with a programme leading to higher ratings, larger audiences and continued production.

Those who share a strong interest in or admiration for a particular sport, art form, or famous person are more commonly referred to as fans (Oxford Dictionary, 2010). Fans have a very strong interest and passion in every minor detail of their interest and this passion is what binds a group of fans together. Fandom evolved from the passions of people following sport and sport personalities but has over the years come to include such areas as science fiction. The invention of television fandom in the early 1970s has led to a focus on relationships

between characters within television programmes and movie media franchises (Coppa, 2006). The use of Information Technology as a platform for promoting fandom is rarely addressed in IS. However, the newer technologies of social media provide an ability to connect people more effectively and would appear to be particularly valuable for creating communities with a shared interest such as fans of a particular programme. Some of the 'older' media such as television and film production are challenged to include these environments in their marketing departments to promote their products to their fans (Siapera, 2004). Although there has been literature on how to promote using the web, there is little research into the use of social media itself to promote and create community for television shows and films. The research question for this paper therefore is: How does Facebook facilitate community in television fandom sites?

This paper is structured as follows: Section two reviews online communities and the use of social media to market to and build online communities. The following section describes the research methodology and case studies. Section four discusses the findings gained from the research and conclusions are given in Section five.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term community as defined by Gusfield (1975) has two major uses. The first and traditional use is defined as a network of individuals drawn together by geographical location – neighbourhood, town, and city. The second use is defined as having a "relational" effect with "quality of character of human relationship, without reference to location" (p. xvi). It was also noted that these two are not mutually exclusive, although, Durkheim (1964) states that modern society develops community around interests and skills rather than based on geographic location. With the continued uptake of the Internet, communities are moving online and are becoming a subject of research interest in IS.

What is an Online Community?

A virtual or online community can be defined "by the software (technology) that supports it. These software technologies support the communication within the community, and can help to create the boundaries of the community" (Lazar & Preece, 1998, p. 85). Many online communities are based on traditional, physical communities as many of the relationships in the online community evolved from the already existent geographical ones with an intention to expand the community via the Web (Lazar & Preece, 1998, p. 85).

Online communities "...offer a means by which individuals can seek a new form of community, rather than shun a currently useful one" (Foster, 1996, p. 31). They differ in their relationship to physical communities as they have the potential to cross geographical and political boundaries in order to pursue mutual interests or goals. Virtual communities also have a unique advantage over physical ones whereby the users cannot see one another and therefore cannot form prejudices before reading what they have to say (Rheingold, 2008). The technology of social media enhances this possible building of a virtual community by facilitating the exchange of views with comments of common interests.

Wang and Fesenmaier (2004) identify four areas related to members' needs: Functional, Psychological, Social and Hedonic. These areas were developed for communities on the Internet and not Web 2.0. However, the framework is quite relevant when evaluating Web 2.0 communities as members' needs would still be the same despite the changing technology.

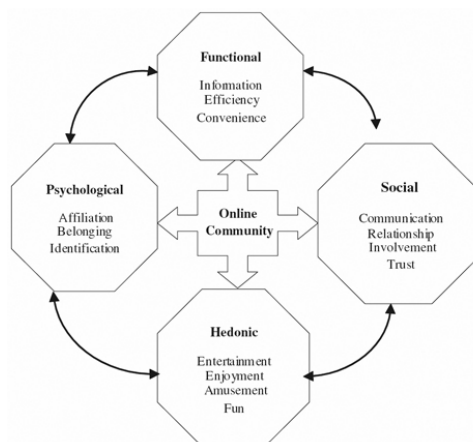


Figure 1: Wang and Fesenmaier's Theoretical Framework of Members Needs (2004)

- Functional - members not only require an efficient way to communicate with other participants but they also require a convenient way of doing this. Social network technologies enhance the ability of the community to meet functional needs of the members.
- Psychological - communities build affiliation and identification and provide their members with a sense of belonging. The use of social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter enable members to interact within their communities to invoke feelings of affiliation and belonging.
- Social - communities are seen to flourish where members interact and reciprocate in an environment of trust where social norms are established. Social networking tools have the capability to support easier methods of interaction and relationship building .
- Hedonic - to keep using and being involved in a community, members need to derive some kind of enjoyment or entertainment. Social networking tools enable members to play games, share photos and comment on other members' photos.

The hedonic theme, seen in Wang and Fesenmaier's framework, is a developing area of research as Social Media platforms like Facebook which are used for enjoyment and fun. Such technologies are classified as HIS (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1992). For these systems to be considered successful they rely more on the enjoyment of their users rather than their usefulness (Davis et al, 1992). Molesworth & Denegri-Knott (2008), using eBay as a case to illustrate the concept of HIS, saw consumers motivated by 'desires, thrills, competitiveness, change and meaningful identities' (p. 370) rather than more rational or utilitarian reasons. Rosen and Sherman (2006) theorised that users would measure the value of HIS by fun and enjoyment rather than the perceived usefulness and hence the more a user perceives a system to be enjoyable the more they are likely to use the system (Rosen & Sherman, 2006).

Each of Wang and Fesenmaier's (2004) four areas do not act independently from each other as seen in Figure 1. Each measure has an effect on the others. For example, the functional measure provides information both in a convenient and efficient manner to members and by doing so it allows members a sense of affiliation, belonging and identification with the community. The community can be seen to be the authority on the area it specialises in due to the efficiency of information flow and can become the main source of information for the community (Wang and Fesenmaier, 2004). Providing members' with an arena to interact and communicate can lead to opportunities where relationships can be built both with each other and with the community leaders and through this trust can be formed. With this trust, members both new and old can find a sense of belonging to such a community (Wang and Fesenmaier, 2004). It is from these social and psychological measures that enjoyment and amusement can be derived for members. If the members gain a sense that they belong to the community and are socialising within it they can therefore be deemed to be having fun. If a member is deriving enjoyment and fun from something they are more likely to socialise and feel like they belong (Wang and Fesenmaier, 2004).

The Evolution from Online Communities to Social Media via Web 2.0

The Internet allows online communication and sharing of information with like minded people. Message boards, online forums and personal web pages became the logical choice to share ideas for those online. However, when the Internet began, speeds for loading of pages was slow and therefore sites were designed for simple information retrieval (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In 1979, Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis from Duke University created Usenet, a discussion board system that allowed Internet users to post public messages. This was the first technology used to create online communities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). As technology evolved and faster Internet speeds became available personal web pages, online encyclopaedias and content sites were developed on the Web. With the advent of Web 2.0 these started to be supplemented by blogs, wikis, and collaborative projects (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). "Web 2.0 is a term that was first used in 2004 to describe a new way in which software developers and end-users started to utilise the World Wide Web; that is, as a platform whereby content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 60).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) go on to define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content." The blending of technology and social interaction for the co-creation of value is a common thread running through all definitions of social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The availability of faster Internet allows users to share photos, thoughts and video much more readily than in the earlier days of the Internet and with this faster technology websites like Bebo, Myspace and Facebook have propelled the concept of online community into an easier more convenient and useable technology (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

This paper has chosen to focus on Facebook as the example of an online community because since it was founded in early 2004, Facebook.com has grown quickly as the social network of choice. According to Experian Hitwise (2010), the term "facebook" was the most searched term in the US for the second year running in 2010.

In 2011 statistics from Facebook.com show that Facebook has over 500 million active users of which 50% log on at least once a day. In particular, 48% of the 18-34 year old demographic log into Facebook when they wake up, with 28% of them logging in via their smart phone before getting out of bed. However, Facebook is not just an online community for younger people and the 35+ age group represents 30% of active users (Facebook.com, 2011). Users spend over 700 billion minutes on Facebook per month (Facebook.com, 2011). An average user is connected to 80 community pages, groups and events and creates 90 pieces of content each month with more than 30 billion pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photo albums, etc.) shared each month (Facebook.com, 2011). Access to Facebook has expanded with the use of mobile technology. This has led to more than 200 million active users currently accessing Facebook through their mobile devices, with those users being twice as active as non-mobile users (Facebook.com, 2011). The reach of Facebook is particularly vast with 70% of its users living outside the United States and, with the help of over 300,000 users, the site has been translated into 70 different languages (Facebook.com, 2011).

Using Social Media to Market to and Build Online Communities

Gaining a competitive edge requires organisations to form relationships and foster positive perceptions about products and services. It is for this reason Hagel III and Armstrong (1997) stated, "Virtual communities have the power to re-order greatly the relationship between companies and their customers. Put simply, this is because they use networks like the Internet to enable customers to take control of their own value as potential purchasers of products and services" (p 8). More recently, the emergence of Web 2.0 has provided a set of tools that allows people to build social and business connections, share information and collaborate on projects online (Parise, Guinan, & Weinberg, 2008). Social media marketing is being integrated into many organisations' promotional and marketing communications plans (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Using Web 2.0 is a strategy that some organisations have adopted to connect with their targeted markets better (Mangold & Faulds, 2009) and is being used to replace traditional advertising and promotion (Parise et al, 2008).

As yet many companies do not take full advantage of what Web 2.0 can do as this technology allows consumers to converse easily with each other about products both in a positive and negative fashion - something many companies may not prefer to happen (Parise et al, 2008). Companies may be missing an opportunity to gain a competitive edge by using this technology. These tools can be used to get the consumers involved, inviting them to participate in promotional and marketing-related activities from product development to feedback to customer service (Parise et al, 2008). However, consumers may require some incentive to share their thoughts, opinions and experiences on a company Web site (Parise et al, 2008). "In an online community, every company needs to find an effective balance between trying to steer the conversation about its products and allowing the conversation to flow freely" (Parise et al, 2008). Companies are finding that giving consumers the opportunity and freedom to say whatever is on their mind, whether positive or negative, will be seen as an indication of a fair and open community. However, moderators are required to keep things running smoothly and coherently, but they should not guide conversation along a predetermined track. "The more that consumers talk freely, the more a company can learn about how it can improve its products and its marketing" (Parise et al, 2008). This freedom to express oneself is important when considering online fandom communities especially given the passionate nature of fans. It serves as a positive measure on the part of the television and film productions to encourage nurture and embrace these communities and their members.

METHODOLOGY

The research for this paper is conducted using an ethnographical approach called Netnography as described by Kozinets (2009). With many people now using online communities the Internet has become an important area of research. Netnography is a method specifically designed to study cultures and communities online from a marketing perspective. It is a branch of ethnographic research, and the guidelines provided by Myers (1999) for ethnographic research in IS can be applied. Ethnographers should write up their field notes on a regular basis, these notes can include observations, impressions, feelings, hunches, and questions which emerge (Myers, 1999). Another guideline refers to the importance for ethnographers to regularly review and develop their ideas as the research progresses. Lastly, since an ethnographer produces a large amount of data, the researcher must develop strategies to deal with this right from the start. At every step of the way the ethnographer should be summarising, indexing and classifying the data as appropriate (Myers, 1999). This research uses the purely observational or 'lurker'¹ method of Netnography, whereby the researcher does not participate in the interactions of the community and only notes and observes how the community interacts (Kozinets, 2009).

¹ A lurker is one who lurks, in particular a user of an Internet chat room or newsgroup who does not participate. (Oxford Dictionary, 2010)

Data Collection and Analysis

Three Facebook Fan pages of popular TV shows were selected to form the basis of this research. Each page was selected for a unique reason and selection was based on type of audience, likely age of community members and size of the online community. The researcher observed the pages by the lurker method of Netnography and noted the status updates, links, posts, pictures and videos as well as the comments made by members and interactions of each of the three communities. These notes were recorded in a daily journal over a six week period 15 November 2010 to 26 December 2010. Every post was noted and analysed against the four areas as described in Wang and Fesenmaier's (2004) theoretical framework (see Figure 1). The features of Wang and Fesenmaier's Theoretical Framework of Members Needs were also used to analyse the data in the journal.

Context of the Case Studies

The TV series selected for this study are Doctor Who, Glee and the Big Bang Theory. Each case was selected to reflect the demographics of the shows matched against the demographic usage statistics of Facebook. In addition, each show has been air for different lengths of time, Doctor Who has been on air since 1963 and hence has a long standing fan community while The Big Bang Theory is a more recent show but has a very large fan community. Glee is a new show but already has a large fan base.

Doctor Who - Doctor Who is a British science fiction television programme produced by the BBC. The program depicts the adventures of a mysterious and eccentric Time Lord known as the Doctor who travels through time and space in his time machine, the TARDIS (an acronym for Time And Relative Dimension(s) In Space), which normally appears from the exterior to be a blue 1950s British police box. With his companions, he explores time and space, faces a variety of foes and saves civilizations, helping people and righting wrongs.

The programme is listed in Guinness World Records as the longest-running science fiction television show in the world (BBC News, 2006). Furthermore, as the "most successful" science fiction series of all time, in terms of its overall broadcast ratings, DVD and book sales, iTunes traffic, and "illegal downloads". It has been recognised for its imaginative stories, creative low-budget special effects during its original run, and pioneering use of electronic music (originally produced by the BBC Radiophonic Workshop) (BBC News, 2006). The show is a significant part of British popular culture in the United Kingdom and elsewhere it has become a cult television favourite. The programme originally ran from 1963 to 1989. With an unsuccessful attempt to revive regular production in the form of a 1996 television film, the programme was relaunched in 2005 and is currently in its sixth season of this relaunch. The Doctor Who Fan Page was selected as it already has a vast cult following and already existent large community, many of whom are from a technology background and already use technology like social media. The show is aimed at a family audience meaning that the show is viewed well by the 35-44 year age demographic as well as the children audience demographics. The Facebook Fan page studied was created by a fan, Craig Hurle in February 2010 and has 20 thousand members. It is noteworthy that the BBC does not manage the Facebook page being studied due to the laws in the United Kingdom governing the Television Licensing which prohibit the use of promotion through third party technology.

The Big Bang Theory - The Big Bang Theory is an American sitcom created by Chuck Lorre and Bill Prady and is produced for the CBS network in the United States (CBS.com, 2007). The program follows five characters: physicist Leonard Hofstadter and theoretical physicist Sheldon Cooper who are roommates; their neighbour Penny, an attractive blonde waitress and aspiring actress and Leonard's and Sheldon's equally geeky and socially awkward co-workers and friends Howard Wolowitz, and Rajesh Koothrappali. The show's humour comes from the geekiness and intellect of the four guys which are contrasted for comic effect with Penny's social skills and common sense (CBS.com, 2007). The show premiered on CBS on September 24, 2007 and is currently in its fourth season (CBS.com, 2007). The Big Bang Theory Fan Page was selected as it too appeals to the technology audience as well as a youthful audience, marketed toward the 18-30 year old demographic. The Facebook fan page studied was created by the CBS promotions departments in August 2008. The page currently has over 9 million members.

Glee - Glee is a musical comedy-drama television series created by Ryan Murphy, Brad Falchuk and Ian Brennan, and is produced for FOX network in the United States (Fox.com, 2009). The program focuses on the high school glee club New Directions competing on the show choir competition circuit, while its members deal with relationships, sexuality and social issues. The show mixes drama, comedy and musical numbers to tell its weekly morality story (Fox.com, 2009).

The show premiered its pilot on FOX on May 19, 2009 and the series began airing September 9, 2009 and is currently in its second season. The Glee Fan Page was selected as it appeals to the tween demographic with efforts in its second season to appeal to the 18-49 year old demographic as well. The Glee Fan Page studied was created by the FOX promotions departments in March 2009. The page currently has over 10 million members.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

For six weeks a daily journal was kept assessing each and every interaction made by the three Fan Pages moderators and members. Table 1 shows an overview of how each fan page was assessed against the four areas as described in Wang and Fesenmaier's (2004) Theoretical Framework for online communities of, functional, psychological, hedonic and social. An 'X' denotes where a feature was found on each Facebook site.

Table 1: A categorisation of journal data and how applies to Wang and Fesenmaier Theoretical Framework

		Big Bang Theory	Glee	Doctor Who
Functional	Information Efficiency	X	X	X
	Convenience	X	X	X
Psychological	Affiliation	X	X	X
	Belonging	X	X	X
	Identification	X	X	X
Hedonic	Entertainment	X	X	X
	Enjoyment	X	X	X
	Amusement	X	X	X
	Fun	X	X	X
Social	Communication	X*	X*	X
	Relationship			X
	Involvement			X
	Trust	X*	X*	X

*The feature was used but more in an acknowledgement rather than a true community communication measure

This section is broken down into each area of the Wang and Fesenmaier theoretical framework for online communities. Each factor is defined and then discussed each case is discussed in term of this factor. Quotes from the journal have been provided as they were written as well as the format they were posted in. In brackets the activity from the community is provided in the number of likes and comments.

Functional - Members not only require an efficient way to communicate with other participants but they also require a convenient way of doing this. Social network technologies enhance the ability of the community to meet functional needs of the members (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004).

Facebook fan pages provide members with an efficient and convenient way to receive information. When one "likes" a page they instantly receive all posts from the fan page. "Like" is the term used by Facebook for becoming a member of a page. It is also used as a term to show that members have a positive opinion about a post made by a friend, member or page moderator. This information is added to the members' own personal news feed which is the Facebook equivalent of an intranet portal homepage.

This use of the technology means that each Fan page has the potential to provide information in a *convenient* centralised manner as well as provide *information efficiently* to all its members. This means that each Fan page can easily promote and provide information to their community without requiring the members to visit the Fan page independently as this information is already in their news feed. The three fan sites studied address the provision of information efficiency and convenience in similar ways:

The Glee Fan page provided posts on its page as a method to remind its members when the show was airing both in the day before the show as well as on the day itself. The moderators also provided updates for both the East and West Coast of the USA to remind members when the show was about to air on their respective side of the country. These updates provide convenience to the members as it reminds them of when episodes of Glee will be on television. For example: 29/11/10 GLEEkS! Check out the full performance of "Hey Soul Sister" by The Warblers from TOMORROW night's all-new episode – http://youtu.be/X-Ysqz_sMU0 (18011 likes and 1574 comments)

The comments were more of an excited nature but did not really spark any cross communication amongst the members. It can be assumed that the information about the upcoming episode was an useful and efficient reminder to the members about when the show was on. This method was used in weeks where there were repeat episodes as well 22/12/10 It's Christmas at McKinley High in tonight's encore episode of "A Very Glee Christmas" at 8/7c! (7138 likes and 806 comments). The comments showed how the members were excited about the repeat episode.

Similarly, The Big Bang Theory Fan page used the same method to remind its members when the show was airing. The moderators of this page were however not as active during the weeks when the show did not air. In weeks when the show aired they provided updates of several different media types (video and pictures) on days before the show aired as well as on the day itself. For example, an update with a link to a promotional video on

the CBS website: *07/12/10 Thursday: The excitement is building and it can only mean one thing... well, Sheldon says it best... <http://bit.ly/gB6fcI> (7516 likes and 577 comments)*. Some good discussion points were made by community members, including how they could not see the video due to the region locking on the site. The region locking influence the convenience of the updates.

The Glee and The Big Bang Theory fan pages both provide information for convenience and efficiency for special events such as the Golden Globes for its members. For example: *15/12/10 Congratulations! GLEE has received 5 Golden Globe nominations: Supporting actress in series, mini-series or motion picture made for tv: Jane Lynch, Supporting actor in series, mini-series or motion picture made for tv: Chris Colfer, Best Performance by an Actress in a TV Series - Comedy: Lea Michele, Best Performance ...by an Actor in a Comedy: Matthew Morrison, Best Comedy: Glee.* (20476 likes and 1152 comments).

Many members would not have been able to find out if the show had been nominated without doing a search of the web for this exact information. As you can see from the above post all the relevant information regarding the show's nomination and specifically about those who were nominated have been provided to the community in a simple efficient manner. Most of the comments were of a congratulatory manner but did spark some cross member conversation, but only a very small number of comments made.

Unlike the other two Fan pages, The Doctor Who Fan page did not have an episode air until the last week of the observation period. This however did not stop the moderators providing convenient information about the upcoming show. Not only did the show provide links to articles about the upcoming episode they also provided a daily countdown to promote the episode. This countdown tool became more amusing from 11 days before the episode as the moderators used pictures of the 11 actors who played the lead character of the Doctor to signify how many days were left before the episode was to air, much like the 12 days of Christmas advent calendars.

The Doctor Who Fan page tried to provide as much information possible to its members around the world of when the Christmas episode was to air in their country. When it was announced that BBC America would air the episode almost at the same time as the UK a post was made on the Fan Page: *17/11/10 GOOD NEWS FOR AMERICAN DOCTOR WHO FANS, BBC AMERICA WILL SCREEN THE DOCTOR WHO CHRISTMAS SPECIAL AND DOCTOR WHO PROMS ON CHRISTMAS DAY AT 9PM EST* (53 Likes and 20 comments)

This post lead to many comments from members requesting when the episode would air in their respective countries. The moderator of the fan page responded to this post saying when information was available.

The availability of information of when episodes would air in each country contrasts significantly with Big Bang Theory and Glee that had region locking. The inclusive nature of the online community could lead to many fans joining the page.

Psychological - Communities build affiliation and identification and provide their members with a sense of belonging. The use of social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter enable members to interact within their communities to invoke feelings of affiliation and belonging (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004).

By the design of the technology of Facebook, when you join a Facebook Fan page, you clearly become a member of that community as every page you fan becomes a "badge" on your own personal profile page. It also announces to your "friends" on Facebook that you "liked" the fan page. This public announcement in your feeds provides a clear sense of identification and affiliation with that page. By joining fan pages the member gets a sense of community. You are attached to other people who share a common interest and now have an opportunity to share, discuss and communicate with those who have the same interest as you do. This sense of belonging is key to any community whether online or not.

Hedonic - To keep using and being involved in a community, members need to derive some kind of enjoyment or entertainment. Social networking tools enable members to play games, share photos and comment on other members' photos (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004).

Facebook Fan page members do seem to get a sense of fun and amusement from joining pages such as Glee, Big Bang Theory and Doctor Who. They get efficient and convenient information whenever a picture, link or wall post is posted. Furthermore, it provides the opportunity for members to "like" and comment on what has been posted. This interacting can lead to not only enjoyment and fun but socialisation and network connections for the members. This is evident by the number of "likes" per post. By simply "liking" a post on Facebook a person shows they were amused or approve of what has been posted.

If the members did not find amusement or enjoyment from this then they would not join the page. This being said there are many members who are more passive in their membership than others. For example of the 10

million members on the Glee page only 1% seem to be actively involved in commenting on the page's posts, the same can be found on the Doctor Who and Big Bang Theory.

For many on the Glee and Big Bang Theory pages commenting on posts has simply been "first comment" which seems to be some kind of enjoyment from simply being the first to comment on a post without any actual contribution to the post being provided. In addition many comments were positive towards the show and posts. Many of the members seemed to simply derive enjoyment from the posts provided, this is evident by the number of "likes" a post receives. This attempt at enjoyment is fleeting and carried to the "likes" but not interaction. Personal enjoyment is indicated but not shared beyond the "like" of the post.

In contrast the Doctor Who Fan page members mostly commented in a more constructive manner. Many members of this page seemed to get a higher level of enjoyment from the interaction with other members and the community sharing of knowledge and ideas in many discussion points. An example of this is: *28/11/10 You know your a DOCTOR WHO Fan when* (68 likes and 218 comments). Many of these comments were of a humorous nature and with much joking between the members. Discussion was also encouraged by the moderators by posing questions for the community: *15/11/10 Today's DOCTOR WHO Question : Who would you have play the Master if John Simm regenerated (as he said he would if he returned) ?* (54 likes, 34 comments)

Many comments made were answering the question, some joke answers with comments back and forth amongst members. This effort by moderators appears to be designed especially to encourage the enjoyment of members and encourage socialisation community.

Social - Communities are seen to flourish where members interact and reciprocate in an environment of trust where social norms are established. Social networking tools have the capability to support easier methods of interaction and relationship building (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004).

Although all three pages have the ability for cross member interaction and reciprocation only the Doctor Who Fan page members interacted with one another. This interaction has been encouraged by the moderators of the community by not only replying to comments made by members but actively encouraging discussion amongst members on topics based around the show. For example a discussion on when the Christmas Special Episode of Doctor Who was to air on Christmas Day in the USA was given. Many members then discussed when the show would air in their respective countries. Feedback was provided by the page's moderator through the comments on the update of when the episode would air in many of the countries.

Moderators of the Doctor Who fan page also encourage members to socialise with each other for example: *23/11/10 CELEBRATING AN AMAZING 47 YEARS OF DOCTOR WHO!, Since the debut of the DOCTOR, and the very first episode broadcast of the Unearthly Child! How are you celebrating? Let us know at the event below, and join in the celebrations all today at <http://www.facebook.com/The.Doctor.Who.Tardis>* (61 likes and 11 comments)

One member even suggested the members go watch the first episode to celebrate this occasion and even suggested a website that could allow them to do that. Afterwards, several members commented again saying that they had done so and further discussion ensued.

The elements of Wang and Fesenmaier's Social element of their theoretical model; Communication, Relationship, Involvement, Trust, do not appear to be encouraged by the Glee and The Big Bang Theory fan pages. Both pages seem to be under a traditional marketing strategy where those running the fan page view the page as a broadcast site for links, photos etc but do not encourage discussion between members. This was greatly evident on the Big Bang Theory page where the page was only active when a new episode was to air that week. It is to be noted though that the Glee fan page did make an attempt at communicating with its members by posting a "thank you" for reaching 10 million fans by posting two videos: *16/12/10 Thanks to each of the 10 million GLEE fans on Facebook! To celebrate your awesome GLEEK-iness the cast answers some fan questions just for you! THANKS! Part 1* <http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=475710887098&oid=55482772043&comments&ref=mf> (11520 Likes 844 comments)

REFLECTION ON COMMUNITY

All three Fan sites have tried to take advantage of social media technology to create an online community bringing traditional fandom into the social media space. All the fan pages observed align with the functional, psychological and hedonic measure as described by Wang and Fesenmaier's Theoretical Framework (2004) for measuring members' needs. By aligning with these three measures a form of community is created. Both the Glee and The Big Bang Theory fan pages are managed by the marketing departments of the networks they are

aired on, while the Doctor Who fan page is managed by a fan and not the BBC. This difference in ownership could explain the difference in the focus of how the community is organised. Traditional marketers prefer to keep customers away from each other and avoid having them discuss the products openly as any negative comments or opinions can provide negative effects on the product and take focus away from the message the company is providing. In contrast, fan communities encourage the communication between members as they do not have this focus and encourage any discussion of the product. This creates a more social community that enhances the hedonistic and psychological aspects of members and in turn generates more activities and interest from fans.

We question whether the Glee and The Big Bang Theory fan page members can really be called fans as it is defined by this paper. Members join these communities to be better informed about the show they “like” and to gain an instantaneous gratification from this information, but they do not really share their passion for the show through discussion. In contrast those members of the Doctor Who fan page do discuss and share information through the fan page and can therefore meet the definition.

Another consideration is the size and age of the communities themselves. The Glee and The Big Bang Theory fan pages have millions of members who have joined their page and both have been online for a few years while the Doctor Who fan page only has twenty thousand members and is less than a year old. This size and age difference could make engaging members and encouraging discussion amongst them harder, as a smaller community could be easier to manage. It may also reflect the cult status of Doctor Who achieved after the many years of the programme and science fiction fans in general.

However, we believe the owners of both the Glee and The Big Bang Theory fan pages have missed an opportunity to create a HIS whereby they can engage and understand their audience better by not encouraging discussion amongst them as described by Wang and Fesenmaier’s social measure.

A more vibrant community can be created by aligning with the social needs of members as evidenced by the Doctor Who Fan page. Not only does this page align with the functional, psychological and hedonic measures but also the social. Although the site only has twenty thousand members as opposed to the millions of the other two sites, the moderator of the page gathers a fuller understanding of what the members’ needs are and can tailor more effectively for those needs. This communication builds a more vibrant relationship between the page and the members and hence increases the involvement that can be gained from the members of the fan site.

CONCLUSIONS

The use of the Internet and especially Web 2.0 is leading to an evolution into how society communicates. No longer are we limited to seeking out those of common interest in the physical world, but can now expand our reach via the web to create communities online. Social media technology, such as facebook.com, has been created with the intention to facilitate an easy and efficient way for users to create online communities. Traditional TV advertising may not always help to promote a show and, it is possible to miss TV advertisements. Given the uptake of social media it is logical that television and film companies seek to find their fans online and to form online communities to which they can market. This can be seen as a burgeoning idea in promotion departments of television shows such as Glee. The Glee fan page was created before the show aired and has attracted a large number of members in a very short time.

It is possible to form a type of community by only meeting the functional, psychological and hedonic measures of Wang and Fesenmaier’s Theoretical Framework. This was evident in all three cases having many members join their page. However, television and films can promote more efficiently to their fans and build improved online communities by meeting the social measure, as illustrated by the Doctor Who page. Despite it being the youngest site of the cases studies with the smallest number of members, it best fits with the framework as the members appeared to be more involved and more active than the members of the other two pages. The smaller number of members could be a contributing factor of the site’s success as it is easier to cater and respond to the needs of twenty thousand members than to ten million. Further research into the use of social media for fandom communities is needed. Investigation into how communities can enhance fans’ allegiance to their programmes would support new ways of promotion and marketing of television programmes and movies.

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