

APPENDIX C

9 GOOGLE SOCIAL DESIGN BEST PRACTISES

WEB 3.0 - CONTENT, COMMUNICATION AND CONTEXT

Social Design Best Practices

If you're new to developing social applications, it can be difficult to immediately grasp how good applications facilitate fun and meaningful social experiences. To accelerate your learning, we've come up with a list of a few light-hearted recommendations around building good social applications. Not all of these "best practices" are necessary in every case, but they might spark thoughts about finding new users, keeping old ones, and leveraging the social graph for fresh content and viral spread.

1. Engage Quickly

Across containers, there's a common tendency for a user to take a chance on an unknown application, and shortly thereafter remove it if no immediate value is found. The lesson to be learned from this interaction is that first impressions really do matter, and it's necessary to engage the user quickly before attention is lost. To this end, we suggest you focus on the 30-second experience; before distracting the user with expert features or sending invites, slow down and give the user a simpler taste of what your application is about. Try the following:

- Show value and identity by making the purpose and core features of your application absolutely clear.
- Populate the application with fun or interesting content (especially content from friends) that makes for a browse-friendly experience.
- Make it easy for the user to add content, change settings and feel ownership of the application. This increases a user's desire to keep the application on his/her profile.

2. Mimic Look and Feel

Across OpenSocial containers there can be a lot of variation in the look and feel of pages and profiles. When designing your application, it can help to attempt consistency with the container UI by using similar fonts, tabs and buttons.

In cases where applications strive for stronger identity, it can be good to create a UI look and feel which is slightly distinct but still aesthetically strong to play on a user's tastes and need for self expression.

3. Enable Self Expression

The profile page in a container is often a representation of a user's identity, interests and tastes. From the perspective of the owner, it's a means for self expression and a starting point for exploring the social graph. From the perspective of viewers, it's a place to learn, communicate, and find shared interests. Applications best take advantage of the profile by enabling self expression through common interests around entertainment, brands and groups. Self expression is also enabled through specific forms of communication like gestures and gifts or conversations around special topics.

4. Make it Dynamic

Good social applications aren't only static badges of self expression; they dynamically change to provide an interesting experience across sessions. Change can be derived from the social graph as friends interact with the application to change its state. Change can also occur as the application internally generates new content. In both cases, the day-to-day changes can help to keep an application interesting and desired over time.

5. Expose Friend Activity

A particularly easy way to make an application dynamic and social is to record and present the activities of friends who are using the application. This could be thought of as an

application-specific activity stream in which the news and updates of friends are always presented in the context of the application itself. From these activities, users become more aware of how others are using the application, driving increased use and change.

6. Browse the Graph

Exposing the activities of friends is one method among many for passively browsing the social graph. Users are often interested in low-effort interactions like viewing a friend's most recent activity, comparing content and choices, and indirectly interacting through their own activity. In supporting this style of interactions, it's essential to make it easy to browse what friends are doing. This is often achieved by linking names to a user's container profile or even creating application-specific user profiles which provide an overview of a user's activity and content.

Browsing the graph can also certainly extend beyond just friends. In some circumstances, it can be interesting to see and interact friends-of-friends, especially when drawn together by shared interests. Creating ways for a user to grow his/her social circle adds value to an application from the user's perspective by unearthing opportunities for new friends and content.

7. Drive Communication

Browsing friends' activities and content often flows well into conversation, creating an opportunity to develop deeper social interaction. In places where communication can happen, it's good practice to make the option explicitly available. This can be done in a more persistent, public manner through a comment system or sharing wall. It can also be done in private by linking into a container's messaging, email or instant messaging systems, or even through an internal communication layer like pokes or other simple gestures and messages.

8. Build Communities

A container's entire social graph is often huge, and even a user's immediate social circle might be too large for a user to easily track. By growing smaller communities and making them accessible, an application can provide rich and interesting functionality that enhances the overall social experience. There are three categories of communities which applications commonly build and utilize:

- * Grouped relationships (e.g. best friends, family, classmates, etc.).
- * Shared interests among a user's immediate social circle.
- * Shared interests among the entire social graph.

9. Solve Real World Tasks

Self expression and communication are often fun and entertaining alone, but OpenSocial is also a platform that can be leveraged to solve real world tasks where the social graph assists us in making decisions. For example, while some might be prone to grab a book at random off the shelf, there are many who appreciate a good recommendation from a friend. With a variety of possibilities in entertainment and interests, it can be useful to facilitate meetings, purchases, recommendations, information management and learning to create a richer, more lasting experience across your application.

Retrieved May 20, 2008, from <http://code.google.com/apis/opensocial/articles/bestprac.html>

Web 3.0 - Content communication and context

We now have the tools and technology for openly sharing all types of information online – the web of data. However we are now inundated in a deluge of information that in 2002 exceeded over 18 exabytes or 1,000,000,000,000 megabytes of new electronic data (Lyman, 2003).

Add to this, new social media tools being launched every day and we can find ourselves paralysed with information overload or Social Network Fatigue (SNF).

<http://www.wordspy.com/words/socialnetworkingfatigue.asp>

Social Network Fatigue

n. Mental exhaustion and stress caused by creating and maintaining an excessive number of accounts on social networking sites.

What causes social network fatigue?

1. Repetitive motion: We do the same things over and over: create an account, add our favourite things to our profile, try to find friends, add some (but never all) friends, wait for something to happen. It's a repetitive cycle that, when we realize we're going through it yet again, reminds us that we're not being productive, but repetitive.

2. Too many things to remember: After we sign up for a new network, we have to remember that we did and know how to get back there. If we do remember to check back, we have to remember the username and password that we used to create the account. With only a few accounts, this is easily done. But after you've joined a dozen or so social networks and the thought that you might want different passwords for some of them enters your mind, this becomes a real challenge.

3. Wasted time: With more and more social networks to manage, the time we have left to enjoy interacting with friends dwindles. It's not uncommon to spend hours per week simply managing accounts, not really getting anything useful done.

4. Lack of consistency between networks: One of the biggest problems between social networks is that people we have signalled as friends on one network aren't our friends on another. For example, Facebook friends list isn't even close to a LinkedIn contacts list, though both contain people who are important to a person. This lack of consistency can be incredibly frustrating, as it not only means more repetitive motion of 'friending' them again, but it also makes us think twice about who is where.

The involved process of recreating our identities on multiple services leads to frustration and eventually exhaustion, fade and lack of use of the service or site.

Web 3.0 – Decentralised Me

Web 3.0 will reflect on what worked in Web2.0. Robert O'Brien believes that under web 3.0 we will develop a more effective communication for 'me' as an individual!

"When it is about me it means Web 3.0 must be about more semantics in information, but not just anything. Better communication comes from constraints in the vocabularies we use."

<http://www.outofrhythm.com/index.php?s=web+3.0&sbtt=Go>

UK's Guardian newspaper writer Jemina Kiss writes:

"If web 2.0 could be summarized as interaction, web 3.0 must be about recommendation and personalization,"

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2008/feb/04/web20?gusrc=rss&feed=media>

Web 3.0 attempts to give context to 'web of data' adding personalization, location and context to information so that a person can build a relationship to the physical world that utilises the "Internet of Things"

Life streaming

What is a Lifestream? In it's simplest form it's a chronological aggregated view of your life activities both online and offline. It is only limited by the content and sources that you use to define it. Most people who create them choose a few sources based on sites that track our activities such as Del.icio.us (bookmarking), Last.fm (Music we listen to), Flickr (photos we take) etc... Then you can either find software to host your own, or find sites that provide a platform for you.

Life Streaming essentially is the ability to put parts of your everyday life online. Much like the FaceBook Mini Feed, life stream services are media and social aggregators that keep you and your friends informed about what you're doing online at a glance and in real-time.

These aggregators are becoming ever more sophisticated, building on the blogging concept but utilising web 2.0 concepts for the data input.

Services such as Tumblr.com and FriendFeed.com are the first major attempts at micro blogging applications that also allow the inclusion of activity streams from other services via API's and rss feeds.



Chris | [Account](#) | [Sign out](#)

[friends](#)
[rooms](#)
[me](#)
[everyone](#)

friend settings

Share something

Show best of: [day](#) - [week](#) - [month](#)


Aaron Dustin loved four songs on [Last.fm](#)

[Shihad – One Will Hear The Other](#)
1 hour ago - [Comment](#) - [Like](#) - [Hide](#) - [More](#)

[Sigur Rós – Inni mer syngur vitleysingur](#)
1 hour ago - [Comment](#) - [Like](#) - [Hide](#) - [More](#)

[two more »](#)


mashable posted three entries on [Mashable!](#)

[Zoho Show 2.0 Upgrades: Flickr, Picasa Integration](#)
4 hours ago - [Comment](#) - [Like](#) - [Hide](#) - [More](#)

[Eyealike Finds Your Dream Date, With Faces Search](#)
4 hours ago - [Comment](#) - [Like](#) - [Hide](#) - [More](#)

[Exclusive: Meemix Gives Customization And Widgets To Musicians](#)
5 hours ago - [Comment](#) - [Like](#) - [Hide](#) - [More](#)


mashable posted three messages on [Twitter](#)

"Velvet Underground at 6am - <http://tinyurl.com/6ehrhb>"
4 hours ago - [Comment](#) - [Like](#) - [Hide](#) - [More](#)

"Zoho Show 2.0 Upgrades: Flickr, Picasa Integration (<http://tinyurl.com/6lh6xa>)"
4 hours ago - [Comment](#) - [Like](#) - [Hide](#) - [More](#)

"Exclusive: Meemix Gives Customization And Widgets To Musicians (<http://tinyurl.com/5v3cav>)"
5 hours ago - [Comment](#) - [Like](#) - [Hide](#) - [More](#)


Clovenhoof posted five items on [Tumblr](#)

[This seriously is the best new Dubstep I've heard!](#)
4 hours ago - [Comment](#) - [Like](#) - [Hide](#) - [More](#)

[Big Buck Bunny on Vimeo \(via Big Buck Bunny\)](#)
5 hours ago - [Comment](#) - [Like](#) - [Hide](#) - [More](#)

[three more »](#)


Deborah Micek posted 19 messages on [Twitter](#)

"Ok - starting 2 get the shakes - 9 minutes til lift off - can I make it from Honolulu 2 Vegas without a single tweet?!"
4 hours ago - [Comment](#) - [Like](#) - [Hide](#) - [More](#)

"<http://twitpic.com/2scl> - My favorite pitstop b4 long flight"
4 hours ago - [Comment](#) - [Like](#) - [Hide](#) - [More](#)

[17 more »](#)


mashable posted a message on [Twitter](#)

Friendfeed.com combines content from other services into a stream of information

Twitter is one of the most popular micro blogging services at the current time. It's a communication tool that lets users to post up to 140 character text updates on their current activities, thoughts, or noteworthy links on the Web. Twitterers can be found posting 'tweets' from all over the world, 24 hours a day from the web, desktop or via mobile devices and txt messaging.

What are you doing?

140

[Recent](#) [Replies](#) [Archive](#) [Everyone](#)

Read the [Twitter Status blog](#) for updates about the service.



TVNZNews #TVNZ News: Protest against rates increases (1:35): Nelson ratepayers held a protest outside .. <http://tinyurl.com/57puk5> 4 minutes ago from twitterfeed



TVNZNews #TVNZ News: UK backs off from slashing visa length (0:31): The British government has backed .. <http://tinyurl.com/6budze> 5 minutes ago from twitterfeed



TVNZNews #TVNZ News: Man proves innocence with Lotto win (2:02): Desperate efforts by rescuers failed .. <http://tinyurl.com/59z9c7> 5 minutes ago from twitterfeed



TVNZNews #TVNZ News: Fatal house fire on Kapiti Coast (0:32): Desperate efforts by rescuers failed to .. <http://tinyurl.com/68cnya> 5 minutes ago from twitterfeed



TVNZNews #TVNZ News: Soldier in custody after stabbing (0:14): A teenage soldier is in police custody .. <http://tinyurl.com/Suect2> 5 minutes ago from twitterfeed



wilshipley @gruber Where *DO* you go for good hooker reviews? 34 minutes ago from twitterrific in reply to gruber



TVNZNews #TVNZ News: Assault charges after Hamilton rampage (0:28): A man is facing assault and drivin.. <http://tinyurl.com/47o5f5> 35 minutes ago from twitterfeed



wilshipley @gruber Whole Foods is afraid of salt. @curvyboom pointed out that any time you buy something from them, first pour salt on it, then it's ok 37 minutes ago from twitterrific in reply to gruber



boagworld Just shaved off my beard. Feeling very naked. 40 minutes ago from twitterrific



ryancarson @fraying Good luck with the tattoo bro. I love the idea of tattoos in Eastern Promises – showing the story of your life in ink on your body. about 1 hour ago from twitterrific in reply to

Hi, [your profile](#)



deepfried

Currently

@teina sorry IWC

Device Updates [add device](#)



phone

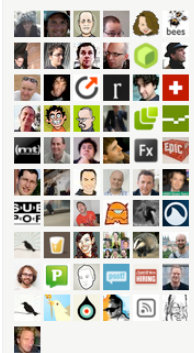


web-only

Stats

Following	61
Followers	22
Favorites	0
Direct Messages	1
Updates	119
Received SMS	0/250

People [invite more](#)



twitter.com allows people to broadcast short messages to everyone who 'follows' their thread.

Other services are taking these ideas further. Twitpix.com allows Twitter users to add images on the go. While other service such as Britekite.com and Fireagle.com allow you to publish you physical location.

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 Posted on June 23, 2008
by [deepfried](#)

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break time

Comments

NOTE: Comments will also be sent as a @reply to the owner of this photo
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Ads by Google

Twitpic.com is a service that 'adds on' to the standard twitter service in that it lets people take photos and sends out a twitter message linking to the photos

Social Nicheworks

The power of niche social sites isn't just in connecting people, it's in providing tools that allow people to do something better than they could before...

The fundamental nature (and utility) of social networks hasn't really changed since they first appeared, however the expansion of social networks has led to the rise of social apps that are often best described as time wasters.

In other words, Social Networks need to find new purposes for people to come back every day and to be loyal. The world of social networks is going to be divided into two – the big players (MySpace, Facebook) and niche players.

The power of niche communities is not just improved communication, it's improved action – in the real world. The value that targeted and focused software can have is astounding... even as the novelty of the web has long since worn off the activities that people take part in in everyday life will always be around.

The future of social networking will be around deeper rather than broader social network tools. They will be more customised to the lifestyles of the social niche community, and help them perform the tasks they need to enjoy on a personal level. Rather than being painted with a broad brush, smaller more targeted sites will fill in the small details that the big social media sites cannot see.

What does all this mean?

It's still not entirely clear at this point in time. Trends in technology adoption are beginning to show with certain activities gaining more popularity (such as micro blogging and photo blogging) , but currently it's mostly the tech savvy early adopters who are using these fledgling services.

What is clear however is that social networks, mobile devices and location awareness will filter through to mainstream use in the future. Location-based social 'niche' networking will make the web a more personal extension of our lives, and allow us to stay informed and connected while not being tethered to a desktop computer.