Chapter 7

Expectancy–Value:
Identifying Relationships Associated with Consuming User-Generated Content

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ABSTRACT

Consumers today have more control over media consumption than ever before, with interactive media helping to transform the industry away from a traditional publisher-centric focus towards a new dynamic user-centric model. Examples of prominent Web 2.0 media environments that support the creation, distribution and consumption of user-generated content (UGC) include YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, Wikipedia, StupidVideos, Flickr, Blogger, and personal Web pages, among others. In addition, recent media research involving Social Cognitive Theory has emerged to offer explanatory power for Internet use and could provide a better understanding of the UGC phenomenon. Therefore, a theoretical model grounded in Social Cognitive Theory was tested examining the relationships between media experience, desirability of control, attitude and the consumption of UGC. A survey was administered to an opt-in online panel (N=325) recruited for Web-based research with the findings confirming the hypothesized model.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last several decades, the media landscape has evolved into a complex and dynamic conglomeration of both traditional and interactive media that seek to serve the needs of today's fast-paced lifestyles. While traditional media are struggling under the weight of increased segmentation, the interactive environment has shown the capacity to capitalize on this fragmented market by offering media alternatives that provide consumers a

voice amidst the whirlwind of information and advertising. In the online world, these new media options are being driven increasingly less by publishers and more so by consumers empowered to consume, create, and distribute media, often referred to as user-generated content (UGC). User-generated content refers to media that is created or produced by the general public rather than by paid professionals and is primarily distributed via Web 2.0 technologies online. In fact, the Internet has come to serve as an outlet for an overwhelming majority of American adults (71%) with creators of UGC expected to climb to 95 million by 2011 (Verna, 2007). Given these numbers, it is evident that UGC must be strongly considered by marketing technology professionals as both a means to disseminate brand friendly information, through both the delivery and creation of media content, but also as a means of keeping a finger on the pulse of their consumers.

Although the creation and dissemination of media content has been a constant in our world for hundreds of years, the potential for an ordinary consumer to communicate with and influence a mass audience has just recently been achieved with the advent of Web 2.0 technologies. Examples of prominent Web 2.0 websites and web-based applications that support the creation, distribution and consumption of UGC include, but are not limited to, YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, Wikipedia, StupidVideos, Flickr, Blogger, and personal Web pages, among others. Amidst the plethora of both traditional and digital media choices today, the Internet has revealed itself to be an outlet where traditional forms of media entertainment can also converge and be offered to consumers in a time and place that is most convenient for them. While traditional media are nowhere near extinction, it is clear that trends are changing such that consumers are in more control of their media consumption than ever before in history and, because of new media technologies, have the freedom to create as well as disseminate content. This media content consumption sphere continues to shift towards a 'user-centric model' led by UGC and away from the past model that has been characterized as 'publisher-centric' (Daugherty, Eastin, & Bright, 2008). Beginning in 2004 with the explosion of the Web 2.0 market, UGC has formed a plethora of niche markets within the media landscape generating more than $450 million in advertising revenues (Verna, 2007, p.2). As a result of this changing paradigm and expanding media channel, top television networks are integrating blogs, podcasts, and news feeds into their current media strategies, reflecting the importance of UGC in communicating with today's consumers. Certainly the accelerated growth of this nascent area presents both significant problems and opportunities for media technology researchers to better understand consumer motivations for consumption and the effectiveness of UGC.

Recent online research involving Social Cognitive Theory (LaRose & Eastin, 2002, 2004; Eastin & LaRose, 2000) has emerged to offer explanatory power for consumer Internet use and could provide a better understanding of the UGC phenomenon. Specifically, social-cognitive theory is a framework that explains human actions along three combined areas: individuals, environments and behavior. Within SCT, behavior is an observable act and the performance of behavior is determined, in large part, by the expected outcomes of the behavior. These expectations are formed through our own direct experience or mediated by vicarious reinforcements observed through others. Ultimately, individuals act according to expected outcomes and learning experiences organized around six basic types of motivations for human behavior: novel sensory, social, status, monetary, enjoyable activity, and self-reactive incentives (Bandura, 1986).

User-generated content has empowered consumers and enabled them to connect with one another in the broad online information space. In this regard, it is imperative for media technology researchers to begin to gain a better understanding of the impact of UGC and underlying reasons

consumers use such content. To date though, little research has been undertaken on UGC and its perceptions amongst the consumers of this type of media content. Therefore, the proposed chapter will focus on detailing the role of UGC within the media landscape by using a social cognitive framework while presenting results of a recent study examining the expected outcomes associated with the amount of time spent consuming UGC. The principal research proposition is that a positive relationship exits between expected values gained from an action and the behavior itself with future behavior capable of reinforcing motivational states. Because consumer perceptions are capable of being influenced by media messages, the effective understanding of the expectations sought and the outcomes obtained from consuming UGC are important to both academic scholars interested in theoretical research as well as media technology professionals focused on branding online.

MEDIA EVOLUTION AND CONSUMER CONTROL

Never before throughout human history have we experienced the level of media evolution currently encompassing our daily lives. Mainstream media, including television, radio, and print publications, have moved through evolutionary lifecycles since their inception. Similarly, the online media landscape has evolved into a robust information space that provides both marketers and consumers with an outlet for efficient, timely communication. As increasing numbers of consumers direct their attention away from traditional media and toward interactive media, marketers confront the challenge of integrating their offerings with those created by consumers themselves. The past several decades reveal a steady decline in newspaper readership and magazine circulation, and though the television market continues to grow in terms of overall viewership, it also suffers a proliferation of program offerings, leading to fragmented audiences and decreasing program ratings (Anderson, 2006).

Today, television, radio, newspapers, magazines, the Internet, movies, music, and more, represent an information society created by technology ultimately converging around the media audience. These technologies have redefined the media environment and thus media consumption as a seemingly infinite number of offerings are connecting and empowering audiences through communication channels. Media scholars acknowledge that traditional media models of communication may no longer adequately represent digital media, for which "convergence" may serve as an increasingly more accurate representation (Perry, 2002). As a result, the convergence of media through technology continues to shift power toward an audience centric model of media control and away from the past model that has been characterized as 'publisher-centric'. In other words, the advancements of technology have lead to one outcome–the empowerment of the consumer.

Recently, Andrew Heyward, former president of CBS news, emphasized "the most important invention in Television in the last century was not the satellite or computer; it is the remote control" (Page, 2006, p. 18). According to Heyward, consumers create their own media environment and "watch what they want when they want" (Page, 2006, p. 18). Audiences face the opportunity to make media content choices themselves rather than rely on traditional gatekeepers (Perry, 2002). Designating this phenomenon as the 'the control revolution,' Shapiro (1999) claims that technology has brought with it a reduction of institutional control resulting in an increase of individual control. Further, Cover (2006) defined the control revolution in terms of a war. He describes this war as a "push-and-pull of author versus (intended) audience control over the text" (p.153).

Human nature suggests that we strive to be causal agents over our environment and the source of our own behavior (DeCharms, 1968). A desire for personal control is motivated as much by sur-

vival instinct as well as our sense of self-esteem and confidence (Shapiro, 1999). In fact, research reveals that desirability of control emanates from both biological and social determinants (Declerck, Boone & De Brabander, 2006) and has been investigated throughout the social science literature as locus of control (Rotter, 1966), actual control (e.g., Cramer & Perreault, 2006), perceived control (e.g., Klein & Helweg-Larsen, 2002), behavioral control, cognitive control (Faranda, 2001; Haidt & Rodin, 1999), decisional control, feeling in control (Declerck, Boone & Brabander, 2006), and the illusion of control (Thompson, Thomas & Armstrong, 1998; Wolfgang, Zenker & Viscusi, 1984). Furthermore, the emerging concept of media control, defined as the audience's ability to consume media content when, where, and how consumers choose, is pivotal for understanding audience behavior given the new media technologies specifically designed to provide control over media consumption, namely UGC on Web 2.0 websites.

The Emergence of UGC and the Power of Media Distribution

Many scholars believe that media fragmentation, consumer interactivity, and personalization are the product of technology advancements. The emergence of the Internet, by its very nature, has enhanced content and file sharing applications, which in turn have shaped the consumption and distribution mechanisms for UGC. Over time, the Internet has become a highly personalized information space in which consumers can tailor their media exposure to their specific needs and desires (Liang, Lai & Ku, 2006). Tailored exposures become possible through Web-based applications that aggregate information and UGC according to subscriber's specifications, which again indicates consumer-centric media exposures rather than publisher-centric ones. As the consumption of UGC continues to evolve, content aggregation tools and Web 2.0 applications built on Really

Simple Syndication (RSS) technology will become more usable and accessible to consumers, helping create a manageable information space that is both customized and relevant. The ability to publish content in the online environment has been possible since the inception of the Internet, because personal publication mechanisms are inherent to the structure of this information space. However, constant, organic growth and change is what leads to an information explosion online and the consumption of UGC. Ultimately, a balance of power between message producers and media audiences has been lacking for years, and UGC potentially represents a power shift within the industry. The trend toward greater control means media theorists must focus more on understanding audience motivations for consuming media content as users are confronted with more choices today than ever before (Severin & Tankard, 1992). Furthermore, examining relationships associated with consuming UGC through the Social-Cognitive Theory (SCT) framework allows academic researchers and media professionals to understand how individuals develop behavioral patterns over time and how individuals act according to expected outcomes stemming from prior experience and personal traits (Bandura, 2001). In the context of UGC consumption, individual psychological traits, media experience and personal beliefs (i.e., attitude) about such media technology are all essential antecedents of behavior.
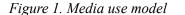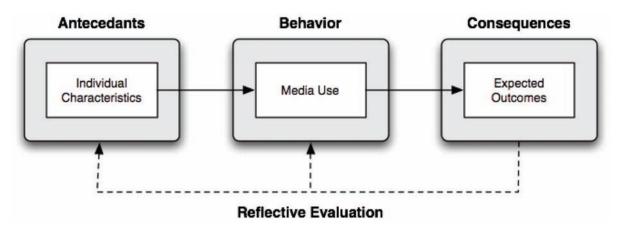
SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY

SCT and How it Relates to UGC

For more than three decades, scholars have sought to understand why people use certain media content within the uses and gratifications paradigm. It has been shown that the uses and gratifications framework provides a bridge between the psychological characteristics of consumerism and media consumption. According to the expectancy-value

approach to uses and gratifications (see Palmgreen, Wenner & Rayburn, 1980), consumers' compare between the gratifications sought and obtained. Based on past media experiences, they develop their future media exposure patterns in a never-ending circular process (Rubin, 2002, p.533). Past research linking general media use and various gratifications from the media are well established (e.g. Babrow & Swanson, 1988; Donohew et al. 1987; Palmgreen, Wenner & Rayburn, 1980). Accordingly, it is a logical approach to apply this well-established paradigm to the consumption of UGC.

From the traditional perspective of uses and gratifications, LaRose and Eastin (2004) have taken a complimentary approach toward understanding media consumption through social-cognitive theory. Social-cognitive theory is a framework that explains behavior while combining three components: individuals, environments and behavior. The theory discusses how individuals acquire their behavior "through evaluations of personal experiences and self assessments of their thought processes, they employ a self-reflective capability that helps them better understand themselves, their environments, and variations in situational demands" (LaRose et al., 2001, p.397). Ultimately, individuals act according to expected outcomes and learning experiences. Guided by Bandura

(2001), LaRose and Eastin (2004) emphasize the importance of prior experience as an explanation to behavior. In addition, personal attitude is also an important predictor of behavior. In the context of the media, prior media experience and attitude toward the media (i.e., UGC) are extremely relevant to the explanation of consumers' UGC behaviors. To examine the relationship between individual characteristics, behavior and outcomes, a theoretical model is presented in Figure 1.

Individual characteristics that users bring into media consumption contribute toward their determined use of a medium (Eastin & Daugherty, 2005). As mentioned, the concept of control is extremely pivotal to human behavior, and media consumers in particular, especially in light of new media technologies that allow for more control by consumers with regard to content consumption. Desirability of control is defined as "a stable personality trait reflecting the extent to which individuals generally are motivated to control the events in their lives" (Burger 1985, p. 1520). According to Burger and Cooper (1979), desirability of control is a motivational trait, which measures how sought-after the personal control trait is for a person. Clearly there is a motivation in our nature to control life's events, however, as with other personality traits it ranges on a scale across different individuals. People vary and

Figure 1. Media use model

thus demonstrate different propensities toward control, which could help explain our different behaviors. According to its operational definition, a person who exhibits a high desirability of control is a leader, assertive, active, decisive and manipulative in situations to create desired outcomes. Conversely, a person who exhibits low desirability of control is more influenced by others, nonassertive, uncertain, doubtful and passive (Burger & Cooper, 1979). Studies that have used the DC construct demonstrate how differences in the desirability of control explain daily behaviors and decisions such as achievement-related behaviors (see Burger, 1985 and also Burger, 1992) and proneness to depression (see Burger 1984).

Past work has connected the control construct with media use (Schutz, 1966). For instance Schutz (1966) suggests, "three interpersonal needs- inclusion, affection, and control- influence all aspects of communication between people" (in Rubin, 1993, p.161). Further, Rubin (1993) has linked external control (related to the belief of fate and chance occurrence) with passive audiences and internal control (related to the belief of self-determinism) with active media audiences. In the field of interactive media, Wu (2006) demonstrates that control, as an individual/personality trait, is related to media use. Furthermore, Alpert et al. (2003) examined the environment of e-commerce and notes that the issue of control is pivotal to a consumer's media experience: "the clearest result to emerge from our studies is users' fervent desire to be in control" (Alpert et al., 2003, p.385). Althaus and Tewksbury (2000) probe the use of the Internet as a surveillance medium that helps gratify two needs while consuming political news contents: the need for information and the desirability of control. Their findings suggest that desirability of control is a strong predictor of news exposure — at least as strong as traditional political knowledge as a predictor. They also claim that the control construct is positively related to surveillance with the media. That is, the greater a person's desirability of control, the more s/he will expose him/herself to the media. Thus, the literature provides evidence which links control and general media use (e.g. Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000; Auter & Ray, 1999; Cover, 2006; Rubin, 1993; Wober & Gunter, 1982). Moreover, research supports the notion that desirability of control is positively related to media use. Accordingly, it is expected that desire to control will positively predict UGC consumption.

Klein and Helweg-Larsen (2002) found, through meta-analysis, a strong relationship between optimistic bias and perceived control. Simply, the more people believe that they have control over future events the more optimistic they are about their sequence of life and events. In marketing communication, an increase of perceived control was linked to pleasantness in service and consumption experiences (see Chandran & Morwitz, 2005; Faranda, 2001). Rubin (1993) has further demonstrated a positive correlation between control and communication motivation for pleasure. Within the context of interactive media, Liu and Shrum (2002) have developed a theoretical model for interactivity and found that the desirability of control variable is a key factor in obtaining satisfaction from the interactive process. They suggest that people who have a high desirability of control will be more satisfied with interactivity than people who have a low desirability of control. In the case of UGC, it is logical to believe a positive linkage exists between desire of control, use, and expected outcomes (e.g., enjoyment) when consuming these forms of media technology. As being hypothesized in this study, this increase in desire of control and expected outcomes may be linked to the ability to consume content in a social setting through UGC behaviors, such as posting videos and pictures.

Previous experience with media also represents and individual characteristic each user maintains that is strongly associated with future media consumption. The reason is because when a user chooses to consume media they are making a decision how to allocate a scarce resource –time.

Numerous studies have dealt with understanding the way people make use of their time resources, make time allocation decisions and choose time consuming activities (McKechnie, 1974; Duncan, 1978; Gronau, 1977) Within consumer psychology, the generally accepted belief is that time allocation decisions are governed by the combination of the temporal activity itself, psychological characteristics, and situational factors (Feldman and Hornik 1981).

Undeniably, an expenditure of time is involved each instance media is consumed and as a result this "experience" is an important factor in understanding media consumption. In fact, the reality facing everyone is that time is a scarce resource and both a precursor and result of media consumption. However, because of the number of media choices today, coupled with limited time, audiences have begun to seek additional control and consume more than one form of media at the same occasion (Croteau and Hoynes 2003).

Finally, a user's attitude toward UGC stemming from prior experience is also an individual characteristic considered as a causal antecedent that reinforces and leads to future behavior. For example, a positive interaction with a certain medium, in our case the UGC, should influence future patterns of UGC use. Conversely, a negative experience (i.e. difficulty of use) should affect UGC use in different ways, and perhaps cause complete media abstention. The more positive an experience with UGC, the more likely people will consume and produce positive expectancies for future use leading to behavior.

A person's attitude represents a psychological tendency, expressed by evaluating a particular object, and can serve various motivations (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). According to Eastin and Daugherty (2005), media consumption constitutes a deliberate, active behavior in which audiences seek content according to their internal motivations. These internal motivations represent functional sources designed to meet specific consumer needs and serve as the foundation for attitude formation,

ultimately influencing behavior (O'Keefe, 2002). In terms of media use, a consumer's willingness to experience UGC depends on his or her attitude toward the consumption of UGC. However, because individual motivations can vary greatly, consumers may decide to consume UGC for different reasons.

Katz's (1960) seminal work on functional theory is considered by many essential for understanding the complex motivational underpinnings and functions of attitude. Functional theory states that attitudes serve various motivations, depending on the purpose, such that one's behavior becomes a function of their attitude toward that behavior (O'Keefe, 2002). The basis of this theory centers on the view that to influence behavior, we must understand its motivational source (i.e., attitude). As noted earlier, the motivational sources driving media consumption depend on the formation of positive or negative attitudes toward a medium. However, because virtually everyone in the United States engages in daily media consumption, media researchers often end up comparing attitudes and experiences with media (i.e., behavior) using a reciprocal relationship perspective (Perry, 2002). According to Myers (1998), the attitude→behavior relationship can range from nonexistent to very strong, such that attitude about a given object determines the person's interactions with that object. As it relates to UGC, a consumer's attitude derives from both the perceived value of the content and how it relates to his or her existing beliefs and feelings (i.e., motivational sources). Behavior ultimately is influenced by the attitude of the consumers who experience UGC. To this end, we expect attitude toward UGC consumption to be positively related to UGC behavior, which subsequently influences expected outcomes.

To parse out the development of attitude and its relationship to behavior, Fazio and Towles-Schwen (1999) present an integrated framework based on either spontaneous or deliberative processing. The deliberative processing route lends itself well to the consumption of UGC, whereas

the spontaneous processing of attitude objects applies better to the creation of UGC. Spontaneous processing of attitudes relies on personal theories of action associated with environmental triggers that cue memories, which suggest an attitude and course of action needed. The act of creating UGC in turn depends on attitude toward both previous experiences with UGC and the immediacy of the situation that involves its creation. In this regard, consumers must have positive attitudes toward UGC in general to prompt their positive reaction to a situation in which they can create their own UGC. Provided a positive cue exists, the likelihood of UGC creation increases as positive exposure to UGC increases.

Ultimately, a user's attitude may affect both the creation and consumption of UGC independently, though we know little about how attitude may explain this relationship. Behavior ultimately is influenced by the attitude of the users who experience it; therefore, we must explicate a more complete conceptualization of the elements of such attitudes. Understanding how a user's attitude influences his or her behavior may have significant explanatory power in distinguishing the relationship between the consumption and creation of UGC. Furthermore, examining relationships associated with creating UGC through the SCT framework allows academic researchers and media technology professionals to understand how individuals develop behavioral patterns over time, as well as how individuals act according to expected outcomes stemming from personal traits and prior experience (Bandura 2001).

While understanding key motivational antecedents that influence behavioral mechanisms in an important process, it unfortunately only represents the first half of the media equation and does not adequately explain the media consumption process fully. To this end, a primary goal of media technology researchers is also to understand behavioral outcomes or effects of media use. The social cognitive approach frames expected outcomes (gratifications) as influencing but also resulting from behavioral incentives (needs). These concepts indeed have the potential to expand our understanding of media and the impact on behavior, in this case, UGC usage. According to Bandura (1986), expected outcomes are organized around the basic motivations for human behavior, such as novel sensory, social, status, enjoyable activity, and self-reactive incentives (see LaRose & Eastin, 2004 for a new media perspective).

Using previous research as a guide, two of the six expected outcomes outlined by Bandura (1986) are applicable within the hypothesized model of UGC consumption and their outcomes. For the purposes of this research, the following theoretically defined expected outcomes are examined, 1) social interaction and 2) enjoyment. Social and enjoyment incentives are directly inline with sensory dimensions used by Bandura (1986) as UGC can be seen as a mechanism to enable social interaction through the use of applications provided by UGC, such as YouTube and Facebook. For example, consumers may enjoy posting amusing clips for friends in social settings, which facilitates enjoyment from the experience.

Developing a Model for Understanding the Consumption of UGC

To examine how prior media experience, desirability of control and attitude toward using UGC influence the decision to consume UGC, a theoretical model (Figure 2) is proposed. In order to test these theoretical relationships, variables from the model were examined using an online survey. While distinct hypotheses were posited from the literature, the principal research proposition was that a positive relationship exists between expected outcomes gained from an action and the behavior itself, with individual characteristics capable of influencing behavior.
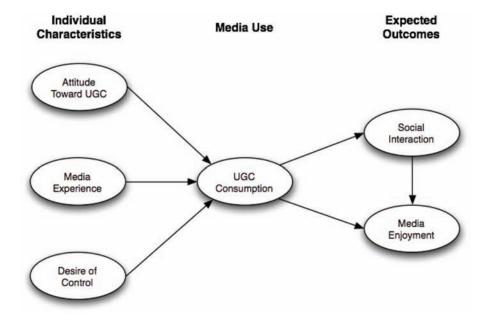
Figure 2. Antecedants and consequences of user-generated content consumption

PRIMARY RESEARCH

A survey was administered to an opt-in subject pool recruited for Web-based research (i.e., online panel). Data were gathered from 325 participants over a seven-day period with 1,000 e-mail invitations sent on day one, 1,500 on day three, and 500 on day 5. The survey was closed once 325 completed surveys were recorded (day seven). Because a purposive sample was selected based on sample size, response rate was not calculated since the survey was closed after being open for the designated duration. However, the completion rate, defined as those who completed the survey divided by those who accessed it, was 77%. The average age of participants was around 44 years old. Fifty-one percent of respondents were male with 49% female. Further, the majority of respondents classified themselves as Caucasian (47%) while attending some college (32.9%) with a household income ranging from $20,001 to $40,000 (28.3%).

At the beginning of the survey, participants were provided a conceptual definition of UGC as a reference to interpret the questionnaire. Specifi-cally, participants read "User-generated content (UGC) refers to media content that is created or produced by the general public rather than by paid professionals and is primarily distributed on the Internet. This includes such online content as digital video, blogging, podcasting, mobile phone photography, wikis, and user-forum posts, among others." After reading the conceptual definition of UGC, participants completed a questionnaire that asked about their overall media experience (e.g., TV and radio), desire of control, attitude toward UGC, as well as their UGC consumption and expected outcomes through using UGC technologies. In addition, their basic demographic variables were also assessed.

Media experience ($M = 824.1$, $SD = 478.6$) and UGC consumption ($M = 237.2$, $SD = 205.1$) were recorded via self-reported 'average time spent per day' items. To assess the type of media most commonly experienced, prevalent categories previously identified were selected (i.e., TV, newspaper, radio, magazine, and Internet). Established seven-point semantic differential scales were used to test other proposed variables with reliability assessment conducted on desire of control, at-

titude and expected outcomes using Cronbach's Alpha (desire of control $M = 4.8$, $SD = .65$, $\alpha = .86$; attitude toward UGC $M = 4.7$, $SD = 1.24$, $\alpha = .93$; social interaction $M = 4.6$, $SD = 1.15$, $\alpha = .95$; enjoyment $M = 4.8$, $SD = 1.15$, $\alpha = .93$), with all exceeding the generally accepted guideline of .70 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998, p.118). Composite measures for each of the scales were then constructed to represent the multiple items and used in the subsequent analysis to reduce measurement error.

Overall, the data fit the model shown in Figure 2, χ^2 (6) = 22.58, $p < .01$; CFI = .91; GFI = .93; RMSR = .10. From this model, experience with media ($\beta = .37$), desire of control ($\beta = .26$), and attitude toward UGC ($\beta = .33$) significantly predicted UGC consumption, which significantly influences the social interaction ($\beta = .41$) and enjoyment outcomes ($\beta = .22$). In addition, there is also a strong relationship between social interaction and enjoyment outcome ($\beta = .61$). From these relationships, 44% of the variance is explained within UGC, 17% of the variance in the social interaction outcome, and 53% of the variance in the enjoyment outcome was predicted. Figure 3 illustrates the model with the path analysis results.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

As UGC becomes more prevalent, understanding why consumers are drawn to consume content becomes increasingly important, especially as the media industry moves toward a user-centric model of consumption. As a result, it is imperative to gain an understanding of how individuals behave according to expected outcomes for the consumption of UGC in order to recognize how such content might benefit media technology. The current chapter presents a framework of understanding the effect of three individual characteristics, prior media experience, attitude toward UGC and desire of control, on individuals' UGC consumption and their expected outcomes of social interaction and enjoyment. While consumption of any new consumer technology requires a certain level of technical knowledge, we expect positive prior media experience and attitude effectively lead consumers toward consuming UGC content. At the same time, desire of media control is another prerequisite for UGC consumption. Overall, this chapter provides some evidence that there is a positive relationship between media
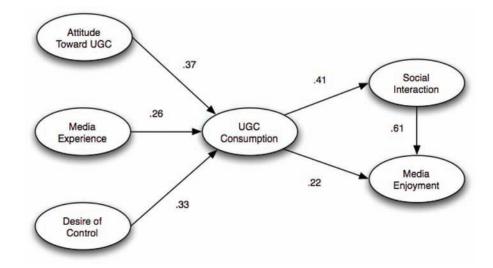
Figure 3. Relationships between individual characteristics, media use, and expected outcomes

experience, desirability of control, attitude and UGC consumption, which provides insight and predictive power for the outcomes of enjoyment and social interaction. In other words, individuals who experience media positively, maintain favorable attitudes toward such media technology, and seek to control content based on psychological tendencies, are more likely to visit and/or create blogs, construct Web sites, and visit wiki sites, which stimulate positive outcome expectancies of UGC consumption. These findings confirm the relationship between a consumer's attitude and behavior toward a given attitude object (i.e., consumption of UGC). Determining this positive relationship is critical as we attempt to investigate the effects of the consumption of UGC on both consumer behavior and marketing communication efforts. This relationship suggests that as a consumer's attitude toward UGC strengthens, the consumption of such content increases, which further is positively associated with social interactivity and enjoyment incentives. This finding spotlights the importance of creating positive customer experiences with UGC, in terms of both products offered and content provided by media technology professionals to promote goods and services through UGC.

In addition, desirability of control also displayed a positive relationship with UGC consumption and the expected outcomes. This is hardly surprising considering the desirability of control construct represents the aspiration of a person to be in control (behaviorally speaking) (see Burger, 1984; Burger, 1992). Compared to other media, and primarily traditional media, Web 2.0 technologies, and beyond, enable UGC to be extremely flexible allowing for maximum control over media content. Accordingly, a person who perceives the "state" of being in control as desirable would probably use such media technologies more often, as our findings suggest. These are important results as they add to the scarce literature on psychological trait influences and media technology. Within the framework of media studies, our findings are

even more relevant and pioneering. To the best of our knowledge, Althaus and Tewksbury (2000) were the only researchers who have examined the desirability of control within the realm of media studies. The authors, as mentioned, applied the scale to Internet use in a political communication environment and concluded that the desirability of control construct is positively related to surveillance with the media. These findings line up with the current UGC consumption findings. Hence, we can begin to observe a solid pattern emerging in regards to the relationship between desirability of control and media technology.

Through the integration of desirability of control, attitude and the social cognitive construct of prior experience, this chapter advances current understanding of how and why people are consuming UGC. As UGC users adopt an active approach when experiencing UGC, they strive toward self-expression by engaging in behaviors that provide them with a voice or showcase their individual thoughts (e.g., blogs, forums, personal Web sites). Future research should explore the impact of individual skill or self-efficacy on this process. For example, the creation of videos, production of music, and acquisition of necessary knowledge to post a wiki require more aptitude than simply using a computer keyboard (i.e., as required by an online discussion forum). Investigating the differences in different types of UGC activities could provide a more in-depth insight. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the psychological makeup of UGC consumers is even more critical because the consumption and delivery of communication messages might be refined for maximum impact. By providing consumers with a forum in which they may consume or use UGC, media technology professionals might enhance the value of information they present online by engaging consumers in an active media experience.

The UGC market likely will expand greatly during the next decade as more users migrate toward consuming UGC. Opportunities abound for media technology and marketing communica-

tion professionals in this burgeoning information space, as evidenced by the forecasted $4.3 billion in advertising revenues by 2011 (Verna 2007). Industries thus must seize this opportunity to communicate relevant content to audiences through this channel. As the digital information society continues to evolve, identifying key individual characteristics that lead to expected outcomes can help clarify media consumption online. The current chapter sides with the idea that a positive relationship exits between expected values gained from an action (i.e., UGC consumption) and the behavior itself. Of course, this single examination represents just a first step in a new and unexplored area of online consumer behavior, and continued work must verify and validate these results to provide a full understanding of the impact of UGC.

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