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Lappeenranta University of Technology

School of Business and Management
International Marketing Management

MOTIVATIONS BEHIND CLICKING THE SHARE-BUTTON

Master's Thesis

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ABSTRACT

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The main objective of this study is to examine the motivations behind sharing information and other content in social media. The goal was also to research how social media has changed information sharing behavior online. The theoretical part of the study covers social media marketing, motivations and Rioux's framework of Information-Acquiring-and-Sharing in Internet environments. Marketer's abilities to influence information sharing is explained through the MOA-model. The empirical research was conducted by using deductive research methods to assess Rioux's framework of IA&S behavior in social media. This study included interviews of 12 respondents. The data was collected and analyzed by using qualitative research methods.

This study confirms Rioux's findings. Everyday information needs motivate information acquiring behavior. The findings show that social and emotional needs for maintaining relationships and the need for participation are considered as the most important internal motivations of sharing information and other content on social media. External motivations include expectations of others, environmental norms, and opportunities to win money. Social media strengthens the motivation for sharing information by offering a platform for satisfying these needs. It has also increased information sharing online due to its ease of use.

TIIVISTELMÄ

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Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on tutkia motivaatioita sisällön jakamiselle sosiaalisessa mediassa. Tämän lisäksi tarkoituksena on tutkia miten sosiaalinen media on muuttanut sisällön jakamista verkossa. Tutkimuksen teoreettinen osuus koostuu markkinoinnista sosiaalisessa mediassa, motivaatiosta ja Riouxin kehittämästä Informaation etsintä-ja-jakamis-teoriasta. Markkinoijan vaikuttamismahdollisuuksia sisällön jakamiseen tarkastellaan MOA-mallin avulla. Empiirinen osuus tutkimuksesta toteutettiin deduktiivisin tutkimusmenetelmin testaamalla Riouxin informaation etsintä-ja-jakamis-teoria sosiaalisen mediassa. Tutkimusta varten haastateltiin kahtatoista henkilöä. Tutkimuksen aineisto kerättiin ja analysoitiin kvalitatiivisia tutkimusmenetelmiä käyttäen.

Tämä tutkimus vahvistaa Riouxin tutkimustulokset. Jokapäiväinen tiedontarve motivoi tiedon hankintaan. Tulokset osoittavat, että sosiaaliset ja emotionaaliset tarpeet ylläpitää suhteita ja tarve osallistua ovat tärkeimmät sisäiset motivaation lähteet sisällön jakamiseen sosiaalisessa mediassa. Ulkoiset motivaation lähteet ovat muiden ihmisten odotukset, yhteiskunnan normit ja mahdollisuus voittaa rahaa. Sosiaalinen media vahvistaa motivaatiota jakaa sisältöä tarjoamalla paikan tyydyttää yllämainittuja tarpeita. Sosiaalisessa mediassa jakamisen helppous on lisännyt ihmisten sisällön jakamista verkossa

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It has taken time to get across the finish line in regards to my studies. Though the road has been long and rocky, I wouldn't change it to the world. Now it's time to head towards new challenges. Although my studies are officially over, learning will continue throughout my life.

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This study is dedicated to all of you.

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Espoo, 20.11. 2015 Tuomas Salomaa

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1. INTRODUCTION

Have you ever noticed when we are online, we always seem to stumble across news that we consider most important or interesting to read about. How is this possible? Due to the multitude of different type of social networks, there is always somebody sharing, tweeting or passing on information that catches our attention. It is no surprise, when according to eMarketer's study, "more than half of the US population use social networks regularly this year, with Americans estimated to spend a collective 830 billion minutes on Facebook alone." On the other hand, the history of sharing is as long as the history of human beings. Sharing itself is not a novelty, as it is part of human nature. The only thing that has changed is the operational environment. It seems like we help each other, spread the word and share personal information more easily online than we do in real life.

Already in the end of last century it was acknowledged that Internet has the potential to change the nature of many existing information processes, thereby creating new models of information behavior. (Hubberman et al. 1998, Choo et. al. 1999) Modern day technology and the vast amount of different social media channels provide an increasing number of opportunities for people to be active and bring forth their own opinions and views. Already in 2003, Internet and American Life Project conducted a study that suggests 44 percent of American adults have created or shared content online (Lenhart et al. 2004).

Despite the possible threat of an information overload from the web, people have a constant need for more information. According to Bernstein et. al. (2010) people are nowadays interested in receiving more information than they did in the past and more importantly they trust this information is delivered to them through social networks. Allen (1970) maintained that more information is exchanged when there is a friendship tie between individuals, claiming that the more an individual knows about another person's background, the more that individual is able to tailor his/her

information responses. In both content creating and content sharing, consumers are becoming ever more active participants in affairs and projects that they feel important.

This change has had an effect on the way companies practice their marketing. Marketing communication has gradually shifted from a one-way interaction towards a more interactive approach, as companies have understood the advantage of consumer participation in a company's marketing process. One of the key points, where consumers can make a major difference in the marketing process, is sharing the content of the company for third parties.

In order to get consumers involved, it is important to understand the motivational factors that drive consumers to share articles, videos, etc. in social media networks. However, there is little information available as to what motivates consumers to share content in social networks. The purpose of this study is to build understanding of consumer behavior in social media and provide information for businesses in their efforts to more effectively take advantage of social media in their marketing and communication activities. This study will examine the reasons why consumers share content in social media networks by examining motivations behind clicking the share button.

1.1 Background of the study

The development of information and communication technologies has created a change in the traditional enterprise and client operating models (Dutot 2013, 54). With the onset of Web 2.0 and social media, internet users have changed from passive content consumers into active participants (Trainor 2012, 317) who interact continuously with Internet content creation as well as create networks and participate actively in online communities (Kozinets 1999, 258-259).

In addition to making interaction between consumers easier, applications have facilitated the emergence of a new kind of interaction between clients and companies (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004, 12-13). Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs and other social media applications allow consumers to express their opinions virtually on any issue they want just as it suits them best (Dutot 2013, 54). New technologies have made traditional means of communication and marketing channels, such as TV and radio to significantly lose their effectiveness (Urban 2005, 156). In recent years, businesses have reacted to the changing markets by increasing access to social media applications as part of their marketing processes (Trainor 2012, 317).

Statistics Finland commissioned a study of Finnish social media behavior in 2014. The name of the study is Väestön tieto- ja viestintätekniikan käyttö 2014 and it shows that half of 16-89-year-old Finns are registered as a member of at least one social media network, while young people are the largest group using virtual communities.

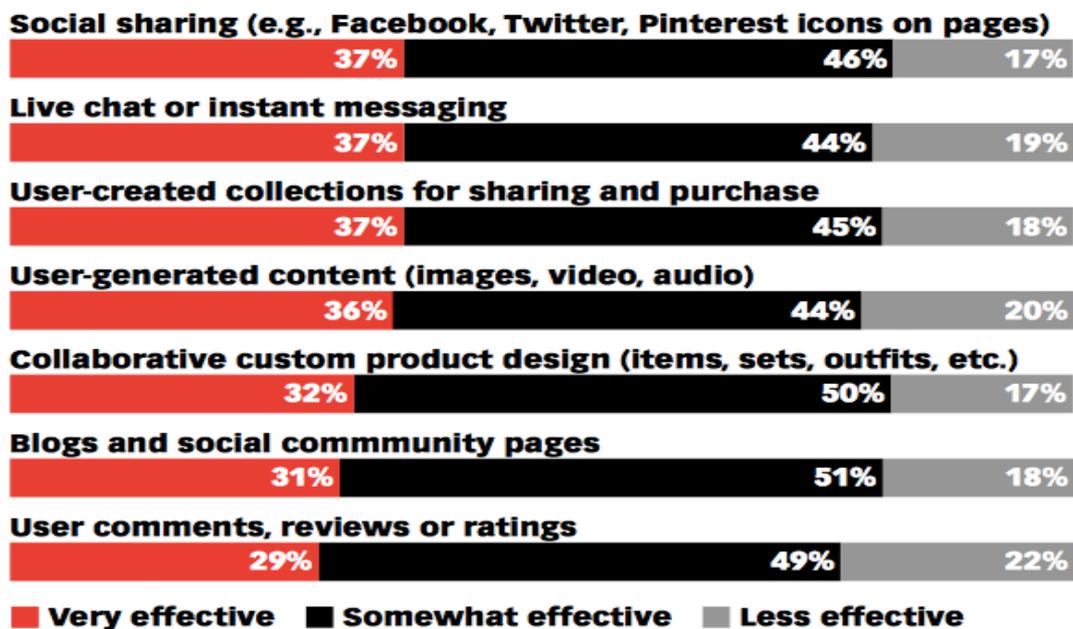
However, only 38% of Finnish companies use social media actively in their business operations, while the use of social media is defined as the company's use of applications that are based on internet technologies or communication platforms designed to connect, create and exchange content between different stakeholders in the company. The vast majority, 83% of Finnish companies, use social media in developing the company's image or advertising products. (Statistics Finland 2014, 14).

Social media is also used as a channel to receive customers' opinions, ratings and questions in addition to using traditional customer service channels. However, many Finnish companies still lack a clear strategy on how to act in social networks. Only one-third of Finnish companies using social media networks have an official operational alignment of the use of social media (Statistics Finland 2014, 15-16).

One of the main purposes of social media is to share information, whether it be thoughts, opinions, ideas, news, deals, photos etc. In 2014, eMarketer Inc. conducted a study called Social Commerce Roundup, indicating that 83 percent of survey respondents Chief Marketing Officers believe that social sharing is the primary benefit of social media. As shown in the chart below, social sharing left clicks, likes and new followers far behind.

Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing Tactics in Increasing Conversion Rate According to Digital Marketers Worldwide, 2013

% of respondents



Note: n=1,858; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding
 Source: Adobe, "2013 Digital Marketing Optimization Survey Results,"
 April 26, 2013

156472

www.eMarketer.com

Figure1. Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing Tactics.(<http://www.emarketer.com>)

When sharing is the key issue in social media, companies need to know what motivates people to share information in social networks. Also in order to attract the interest of customers, and above all to get them to consume brand content, companies need to understand what makes the content interesting and necessary for consumers. It is therefore important to understand why consumer click, watch, consume and distribute brand content. Co-operation with the customer improves customer brand awareness, helps the company to understand customers, increases the effectiveness of marketing and gives the company ideas for future development. (Salmenkivi & Nyman, 2007, 221.)

Consumer research has shown that the customer's active participation in marketing and other operations of the company enables the customer to create a more positive and stronger image of the company's brand. In engagement marketing, the customer

innovates, creates, participates, shapes and evaluates marketing or products / services and thereby generates added value for both the company and for the customer himself. (Salmenkivi & Nyman, 2007, 222.)

In 2013, Kurio Oy published a research “Some-markkinoinnin trendit”, which highlights some of the future trends in social media; fragmentation of social media, popularity of videos, demand for authenticity by consumers, polarization of communities, content marketing and user-generated-content (USG). This highlights how social media evolves constantly and how the role of the customer gains more importance in successful marketing. It also shows how important it is to have a better knowledge of consumer behavior in social media.

This study argues that a company’s ability to understand their customers and to utilize this knowledge in developing their business is essential in making it to become successful. Customer knowledge helps companies to develop their business in such a way that it fits the needs of different customers and keeps them all satisfied. Ultimately, customers create the success of the company, which is why customer knowledge should be a high priority in every company’s top management’s agenda and not only in marketing or sales. Adding the fact that understanding how people use the Web to acquire and share information helps companies to find new ways to reach their customers in environment that is constantly on the move.

From a academic point of view, this study argues that content sharing should be considered as an equally important part of companies’ digital marketing as creating and using user-generated-content. Given the widespread adoption of Internet-based information and communication systems, the number of interested stakeholders examining individuals’ use of the Internet to acquire-and-share information also shows that this is an important area for research.

1.2 Research question and sub-questions

This study seeks to find out what are the motivations that drive consumers to share content in social media, and what processes are associated with acquiring information and other content online. In practice this is accomplished through a deductive test of Kevin Rioux's grounded theory of individuals Information acquiring-and-sharing (IA&S) behaviors in Internet-based environments. Rioux's exploratory study of the general characteristics of IA&S in Internet based environments was conducted in year 2004, the same year the social media network Facebook was founded. In other words, during the time of publishing Rioux's study, the role of social media in people's daily habits of using the internet was minimal to non-existing compared to the present situation and because of this, Rioux focuses in his research to study the internet's operational environment as a whole and doesn't include social media in like social media is understood today. As the role of social media in people's Internet behavior has increased significantly during the recent years, this study aims to research the role of social media in peoples' information acquiring and content sharing behavior in the Internet environments. Like Hershberger et. al. stated 2005: "the holistic model approach, the specific behaviors of information acquiring and sharing (IA&S) truly are the main method in which relationships are born, grow and evolve in virtual communities". In practice, this is mainly done by comparing the empirical data of this study to Rioux's theory.

The main research question:

What are the motivations behind sharing information in social media?

To be able to create an in-depth answer to the main research question, the following sub questions need to be answered:

What processes are associated with information acquiring-and-sharing online?

How has social media changed information sharing in Internet environments?

Why it is important for marketers to understand motivations behind information sharing in social media?

1.3 Limitations of the study

Initially, the aim was to focus only on information sharing behavior, but soon after beginning the research process it became clear, that information sharing couldn't be researched without taking into account how the shared information has been acquired. According to Rioux's grounded theory of information acquiring and sharing, the process of acquiring and sharing information is very complex and therefore these two terms cannot be separated and has to be examined as a whole. Even though, information acquiring and sharing behaviors exists also in other information environments, for example print materials, television etc., this study focuses only on acquiring information in Internet-based environments and sharing it in social media environments. This study limits content sharing to social media and examines motivations behind sharing information in this particular environment. Based on this, two areas of the MOA-model, Opportunity and Ability, are excluded from further analysis and the focus is on the area where marketers are able to influence the most - in other words motivation.

In the context of social media, sharing can be considered as a very broad term. This study focuses on primarily examining the sharing of articles, photos, videos, links, texts, etc. Thus, the content can be generated by another consumer or company / organization by themselves. Content, such as sharing personal thoughts, observations and opinions that are generally thought as the main focus in social media content sharing, are not examined in this study. This decision is based on the fact that users do not have to acquire his or her opinions from the Internet.

Discussing and giving opinions are considered as basic elements of social media. Similarly, this study will not examine users' commenting of photos or status updates, which is generally thought as an important part of the social network sharing. Also, the use of Facebook's characteristic like-button, which enables the user to share information on his likes and interests to other users, is left out of this study.

The study was not limited into a strict framework by defining the term social media in advance. The decision of not defining what social media channels will be examined in particular was based on the aim to gain as much new insight of how social media affects users sharing behavior.

In this research content creation of consumers is not being studied. This study will exclude all evaluation of information sharing technologies' use and design. The study aims to obtain a deep understanding of what drives people to share different kind of content to others in social media environments and what kind of processes is associated with acquiring content that is being shared. The needs and motives of information acquiring itself is excluded from this study as this study focuses on processes and special features that are associated with online information acquisition.

1.4 Key concepts of the study

INFORMATION BEHAVIOR: The examination of motivations is placed under information behavior and therefore it is important for the reader to understand the meaning of this term. As there is no universally accepted, all-encompassing definition of "information behavior", Wilson offers the following explanation: "Information behavior is the totality of human behavior in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking and information use. Thus it includes face-to-face communication with others, as well as the passive reception of information as in, for example, watching TV advertisements, without any intention to act on the information given" (Wilson, 2000, p. 49). In marketing, the term "content" is more commonly used when it comes to sharing online compared to "information". In this research these words act as synonyms.

INFORMATION-AND-SHARING BEHAVIOR: "Rioux (2004) identifies information acquiring-and-sharing (IA&S), as a highly social and pleasant information behavior in which individuals store and recall the information needs of others, associate the acquired information with an individual, and share this information. According to Rioux (2004), cognitive, affective, motivational, and procedural needs lead people to acquire and share information." (Fulton, 2009)

MOTIVATION: "The term refers to factors that activate, direct, and sustain goal-directed behavior...Motives are the "whys" of behavior - the needs or wants that drive behavior and explain what we do. We don't actually observe a motive; rather, we infer that one exists based on the behavior we observe." (Nevid, 2013)

DIGITAL MARKETING COMMUNICATION refers to all marketing communication that takes place in a digital format or in the media. More specifically, digital marketing is considered as a company's or a brand's and its customer's communication or interaction in digital channels. Marketing in social media networks is one form of digital marketing communication. (Karjaluoto, 2010, 13 to 14). This study will focus on this particular form of digital marketing communication.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING (SMM) is "a form of Internet marketing that utilizes social networking websites as a marketing tool. The goal of SMM is to produce content that users will share with their social network to help a company to increase brand exposure and broaden customer reach." (www.whatistechtarget.com)

1.5 Conceptual framework

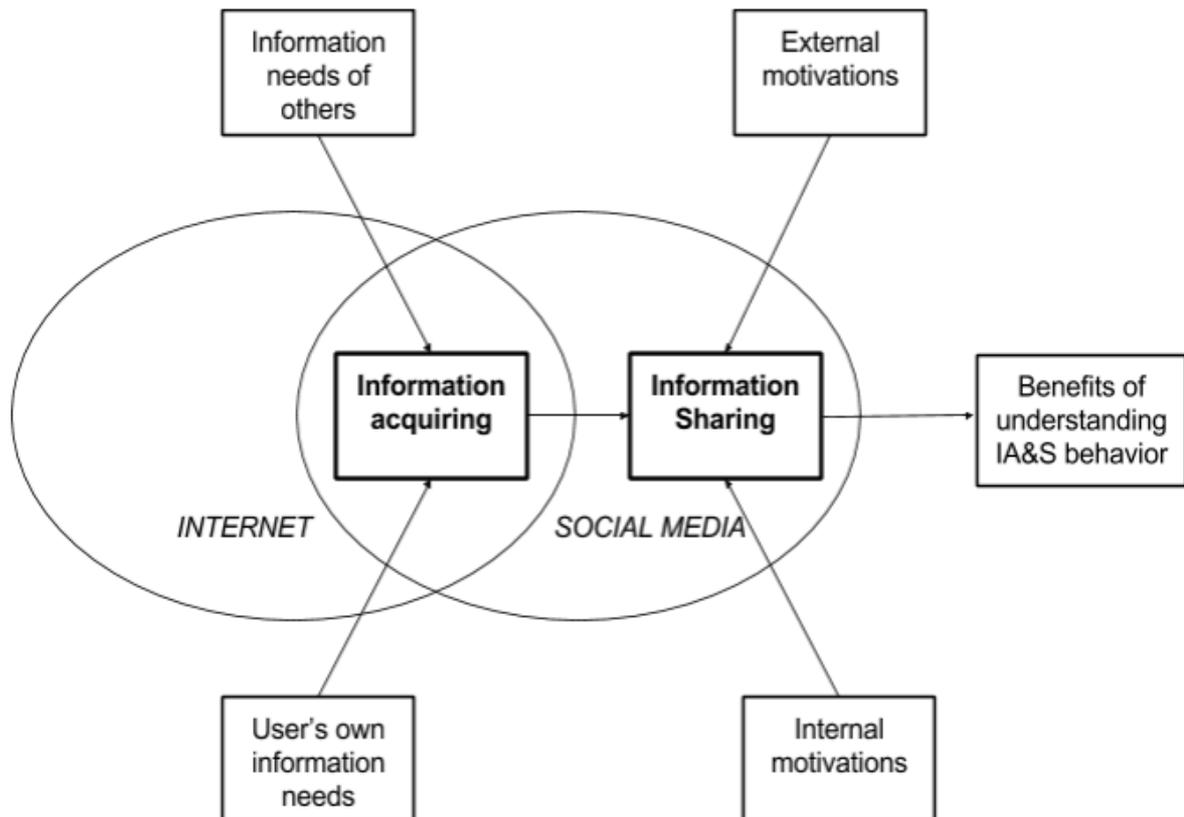


Figure 2. The conceptual framework of this study.

The framework of this research represents issues that are under examination in this study. The framework is built around information acquiring and sharing. The main goal of this study is to examine the motivations that drive information and other content sharing in social media environments. Information sharing is closely connected to information acquiring because without acquisition there would be nothing to share.

On the other hand, information acquiring does not set any limitations on where the information has been acquired. Consequently, information can be acquired from the social media as well as elsewhere from the Internet. The study did not take into

consideration the needs and motivations behind information acquiring, other than to the extent to what processes are associated with information acquiring. One of the issues that will be examined is that does information-acquiring processes include information searching for the needs of others, as well as for personal needs.

The study will also examine how social media has changed information sharing behavior in internet environments. This will be accomplished by comparing the findings of this study to Rioux's research. The power shift in social media to the customers means that a company's brand and its marketing communication in social media are no longer exclusively in the hands of the marketer. On the contrary, customers play a significant role in communication. When planning social media marketing strategies, a company must pay attention to the customers instead of focusing solely on company's personal interests. The better companies understand their customers and their behavior online, such as the customers' IA&S behavior, the better they will succeed in their social media marketing.

1.6. Literature review

From the perspective of this study, Rioux has made the most important research, where he specifically focuses on individuals' acquiring and sharing behaviors rather than information behaviors that occur in certain work groups, demographic groups, etc. The study limits its observations to information acquiring and sharing in the Internet environments. Rioux (2000a) initially identifies information acquiring-and-sharing in his research of SIFFOW (Sharing Information Found For Others on the Web) behaviors. A subsequent study conducted by Erdelez and Rioux (2000b) suggests that many Web users accidentally discover or encounter information for others, and frequently share that information in one way or another.

Since the elements of information acquiring and sharing have been linked to Web-based sharing tools (Erdelez & Rioux, 2000b), information agents (Gross & Saxton 2001), organizational knowledge, communities of practice and distributed cognition

(Davenport & Hall 2002), social sharing (Talja, 2002) and the demographics of sharers (Case 2002). Despite vast scales of these studies, individual users' information acquiring and sharing (IA&S) behavior are absent in the literature and this is problematic because it is impossible to create the complete picture of individuals' information use behavior if relatively common IA&S behaviors are not included in the picture.

There is a wide range of literature available on information sharing behavior of specific user groups, e.g. Miao and Haake (1998), Bierly III et al. (2000), Ramoska (1998) and Citera et al. (1995). Lave and Wenger (1991) have also conceptualized it in the broader context of social and organizational learning by arguing that we learn primarily through engagement in social exchanges and practices. Wenger also suggests that we create informal "communities of practice" in which information is communicated and learning takes place.

Information sharing has also been researched extensively within the context of collaborative work. Schmidt and Bannon (1992), for example, give recommendations for creating shared information spaces for cooperative work involving large and indefinite numbers of people. O'Day and Jeffries (1993) have studied the collaborative delivery of library search results and suggests that library search systems should be added an integrated set of tools to support sharing activities. Knowledge sharing within the context of digital libraries has been addressed by Van House et al. (1998), who argues that the development of technologies that support cooperative work and sharing have to be based on an understanding of the social practices of user communities.

From the view of social media, another important form of information sharing generated by the emerging information technologies is collaborative or social filtering. For example, Maltz and Ehrlich (1995) describe "a type of "active collaborative filtering" system implemented in a Lotus Notes environment in which people find interesting documents and then purposefully send colleagues hyperlink "pointers" to those documents. Goldberg et al. (1992) have created a collaborative environment called "Tapestry" to describe the creation of sharing document annotations by using e-mail. Shardanand and Maes (1995) introduce an idea of a personalized

recommendation system for music albums and artists that can be shared in their discussion of “Ringo”.

A similar type of behavior has been examined by Keller et.al. (1997) in the context of sharing bookmarks. Keller et al. intend to simplify the process of sharing bookmark URLs within groups by providing a special organizing scheme. In addition, a system that supports the sharing of personal Web bookmarks have been described by Susaki and Muramoto (1998).

Academic researches about sharing from the marketer’s point of view largely focus on content creation, particularly in user-generated-content and its utilization in a company’s digital marketing practices. Less has been written about content sharing in the context of engagement marketing. Articles about consumer motivation and the reasons that lie behind content sharing have been written, but academic articles on the topic are few in number. In the field of consumer’s participation in engagement marketing, articles can be found which have been primarily written from the perspective of content producing, but not about content sharing in particular. For example, Johann Fuller’s study, published in 2006, researched why consumers wanted to participate in virtual product development when requested by companies.

Berthon, Pitt and Campbell (2008) studied what leads consumers to become motivated to create and publish brand related ads. Salmenkivi & Nyman (2008, 239 - 247) have researched what motivates consumers to participate in corporate marketing communications, innovation and product development process. Soininen, Wasenius and Leponiemi (2010) list internal and external motivational factors, which lead consumers to participate in social networks. Hars and Ou (2002) examine open source projects and the motivations of the encoders involved in the projects in their article: “Working for free? Motivations for participating in open-source projects”.

Dholakia et. all. (2004) in their article “A social influence model of consumer participation in network- and small-group-based virtual environments” discusses the impact of individual characteristics and social capital on motivation. Wiertz & Ruyter (2007) have focused on the individual (uses and gratification paradigm) and community (group norms and social identities) as reasons to participate online in

their article “Beyond the call of duty: Why customers contribute to firm-hosted commercial online communities”.

Hennig-Thurau et. all. (2004) studied motives behind digital word of mouth in their work “Electronic word-of-mouth via consumer-opinion platforms: What motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the internet?”. Paswan & Troy 2004, Mowen & Sujan 2005 investigate motivations to participate in non-profit activities while Simmons & Birchall published in 2005 their research on motivations to participate in the provision of public services.

Taking into account the figures raised in this study's introduction on how much time people use in social media, it can be argued that there should be more academic research focusing on sharing information and other content in social media and also the motivations that drive information sharing behavior.

1.7 Methodology

The following section will discuss the chosen method for data collection of this research as well as the method for choosing the selected participants. The main purpose of this study is to find motivations that drive information sharing in social media. This will be done by using deductive research methods to assess Rioux's framework of IA&S behavior in Internet environments and to see what kind of effects social media has on the theory. In his work of “Information Acquiring-and-Sharing in Internet-based Environments”, Rioux examines the behaviors and processes of acquiring information and sharing that information with others. Rioux also analyzes the catalysts and motivators that lead to acquiring and sharing information. Obtaining similar results would support the results Rioux received and therefore further increase the reliability of the IA&S framework. It has been learned that comparison can generate new questions and enables concepts to be generalized. (Eskola & Suoranta 2003, 67; Kekkonen, 2008).

To achieve the aim of this study, it would be wise to use the same qualitative methods like Rioux did in his own study. In his study, Rioux applies in-depth description, process, and motivation questions to create grounded theory of IA&S behavior. The grounded theory approach is a qualitative method introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and expanded by Strauss and Corbin (1997; 1998). Wilson (2000) claims that the contemporary emphasis on information users has been characterized by an increased use of qualitative methods. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1997, 1998; Wilson, 2000)

According to Petri & Govern (2004), motivation is a complex and varied process therefore making capturing data about human motivation complex. Evans (1989) argues that motivational predictions are usually probabilistic and it does not prevent researchers of making scientific prediction about motivation. Evans' view is supported by Mook (1987), who indicates "that probability statements about motivation are widely regarded by researchers as being helpful in creating additional understanding about behavioral phenomena." The decision to choose qualitative research methods is also supported by Wilson's (1997) suggestion that motives for information behavior can only be discovered by deduction or through the reports of the user. (Evans, 1989; Mook, 1987; Petri & Govern, 2004; Wilson, 1997)

The research data describes the studied phenomenon and the purpose of the content analysis is to create a narrative and a clear description of the phenomenon. Qualitative analysis is often referred to as inductive and deductive. This allocation is based on the interpretation used in the study of reasoning logic. (Miles & Huberman 1994; Polit & Hungler 1997) Scientifically, the use of this classification is very problematic, because it calls into question the possibility of pure induction. The biggest problem of the classification is practical. It completely overlooks the third scientific reasoning called abductive reasoning, according to which theory formation is possible when making findings is related to the leading idea or clue (eg. Alasuutari, 1994, 1996).

In the classification presented by Eskola (2003) - data-driven, theory-bound and theory-oriented analysis - factors guiding the making of the analysis can be taken into account better. Eskola's classification emphasizes the importance of theory in

qualitative research. Data-analysis seeks to establish the research material in a theoretical entity just like Rioux (2004) makes in his own research. The data units are selected in accordance of the purpose. The key idea is that the analysis units are not thought or agreed upon in advance. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, p. 95)

Discussing the logics behind theory-oriented or theory-based analysis is often called abductive reasoning. Theory-oriented analysis has theoretical connections, but they are not based directly on theory or the theory serves as an guide in conducting the analysis. The researcher's thinking process ranges from grounded theory to ready-made theoretical models. Taken all together, the impact of previous knowledge is identifiable from the analysis, but the significance of earlier data is not theory testing, but rather groundbreaking. (Tuomi& Sarajärvi, 2009, p. 96)

The traditional model analysis is theory-based, wherein the logic of making conclusions is often related to deductive reasoning. A theory-based analysis relies on a particular model or theory. The study describes this model and defines the concepts of interest. Testing previous knowledge in a new context is usually in the background of this kind of a study. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, p. 97.)

For the most part, this study falls under the theory-based analysis as one of the purpose of the study, besides finding motivations behind information sharing in social media, is to test the theory developed by Rioux in a social media environment. In other words, the content analysis of this study is conducted deductively. This means that the classification of data is based on Rioux's theoretical framework of IA&S behavior. However, the theory developed by Rioux is large in extent including many different areas of research, that it is impossible to test the theory in whole in this study. This study focuses specifically to research motivations and other factors that affect information acquiring and sharing behavior.

The part of this research that focuses on how social media affects on information acquiring & sharing behavior the content analysis is conducted through theoretical analysis which is based on inductive reasoning. This is based on the fact that Rioux's research does not cover information sharing in social media and therefore parts of the research, which deals with social media and its impact on the research problem,

cannot be researched deductively. In practice, this will be carried out in such a way that the data collected for this study will be compared to Rioux's part of the study area, which studies the specific features that IA & S behavior has in Internet-based environments. However, those parts of Rioux's research that this study will not be testing, guides this research as a methodological question.

As noted, the connection of three forms of analysis; grounded theory, theory-oriented and theory-based, between abductive, inductive and deductive logic of reasoning is detectable but problematic at the same time. Problematics arises in the classification of theory-oriented analysis - should it be included in inductive or deductive reasoning? (Tuomi&Sarajärvi, 2009, p. 71-72)

All in all, this study's content analysis is more theory-based than theory-oriented. But more importantly, one should be aware that the research has been conducted deductively for the most part, because the study tests Rioux's theory of motivations behind information sharing. Rioux's theory is highlighted at a very early stage in this research, which strongly suggests that this study's content analysis is theory-oriented. Inductive content analysis will be used for researching how social media impacts people's information sharing and its motivations.

While constructing his framework of IA&S behavior, Rioux used a variety of data collection methods. For the theoretical part, Rioux has chosen interviews as the method of data collection to research motivations behind information sharing. Interviews are one of the most common data collection methods in qualitative research. When examining clearly oriented behavior, meaning the intentions to behave in a certain way, interview is the most appropriate data collection method. The idea of an interview is very simple. When a researcher wants to know what a person is thinking or why he acts in a certain way, it is logical to ask from the person itself. (Tuomi&Sarajärvi, 2009, p. 71-72) However, as Alasuutari (1996, 106) points out, that there is no incomparable way to find the truth.

Above all, the main advantage of an interview is flexibility. The interviewer has the opportunity to repeat the question, correct misunderstandings, clarify the wording of expressions and have a dialogue with the informant. The most important thing is to

get as much information as possible on the desired matter. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, p. 73)

As in Rioux's study, the data of this study is acquired similarly through themed interviews or semi-structured interviews. Themes that have been pre-selected are based on Rioux's study. When deciding upon the number of interviewees, it is important to remember that qualitative research does not aim to produce statistical generalizations, but aims to describe a phenomenon or an event or to understand a particular activity. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, p. 85)

1.8 Structure of the study

This study consists of seven chapters. The first chapter includes introduction to the subject of sharing information in social media and motivations that drive sharing information behavior. In addition, the selection of the subject for research is justified. The first chapter discusses the research problems, conceptual framework, limitations and methodology of this study. The reader will also be introduced to previous studies related to the subject area.

From the second chapter onwards the aim of this study is to progress step by step towards its aim. First, the reader is acquainted with the operational environment in which this research takes place. After introducing the concept of social media, the study examines social media marketing. The third chapter discusses marketers' abilities to affect information sharing behavior most efficiently.

The fourth chapter focuses in detail on motivations that are in the core of the research. The fifth chapter introduces Rioux's framework of information acquiring and sharing behavior in Internet environments, that is being deductively tested in this study. The sixth chapter includes the description of the empirical part of the study. This includes data collection, data analysis as well as research findings. Seventh, and the final chapter concludes the previous chapters by combining previous

scholarly literature with the findings. At the end of the seventh chapter, discussion for further research and limitations are looked upon.

2. SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND SHARING

2.1 The definition of Social media

At this stage it is appropriate to introduce the term social media, because it is important to understand the operational environment of this study. According to Kaplan & Haenlein, (2010) the basic idea behind Social Media is far from groundbreaking. Still, managers and academic researchers seem confused of what exactly should be included under this term, and how social media differs from the concepts of Web 2.0 and user generated content. (Kaplan&Haenlein, 2010, 60) Also Lietsala & Sirkkunen share the opinion that social media is not a well-established concept of definition, but it is closely linked to the understanding of new, even revolutionary era and re-modeling of the communication culture (Lietsala & Sirkkunen, 2008, 17).

According to Kaplan & Haenlein's definition; "Social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content. When Web 2.0 represents the ideological and technological foundation, User Generated Content (UGC) can be seen as the sum of all ways in which people make use of Social Media. The term, which achieved broad popularity in 2005, is usually applied to describe the various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by end-users." (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, 61).

Content in social media is largely provided by ordinary network users who are also responsible for its distribution. In social media, people form micro-sized transmission network centers, where each and every user has the opportunity to take the role of a content sharer or distributor. Different kinds of distribution networks emerge from a

variety of content that is being created. As a result, the operation of social network content published reaches a variable number of people. In practice, the process starts when an individual network user publishes content (e.g. a video) that he or someone else has created. When other users find the content they will decide whether they want to share it with other people. (Juslén, 2011, p. 201)

2.2 Social media marketing

The following section primarily examines how social media has changed marketing communications and how these changes should be taken into account in digital marketing.

Digital marketing, which is also closely related to social media marketing, enables marketer to transmit information and promotions, promotion of products and services, building brand awareness and brand image, strengthening brand relationships, engaging customers to the company's activities, learning of customer needs and product launching. However, the biggest impact in the future of digital marketing is believed to be in the development and nurturing of customer relationships, which offers cost-efficiency, as well as easily implemented personalization and interaction. (Merisavo et al. 2006, 15)

The difference in marketing communications between mass media and social media can be seen in the way published information spreads. People play an integral role in social media marketing channels as they work as a mean to disseminate information (Juslén, 2011, p. 201). Social media makes one-way marketing that is often fed to customers, inappropriate to our time. Social media users typically try to avoid intrusive professional marketing communications, offered by faceless and impersonal organizations. Modern consumers prefer more personal interaction (Parent, Plangger & Bal, 2011, 219). However, online publications continue to attract readers with more and more traditional forms of print publishing (Graybeal, 2011, 95).

Social media allows companies to get timely and direct access to end-users more efficiently and at a relatively low cost in comparison to what could be achieved by more traditional means of communication (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, 67). Both researchers and representatives of the business community agree that companies should take social media as part of their business strategies (Parent, Plangger & Bal, 2011, 227).

In the past, the marketer chose the content, channel and timing of marketing communications. Now the process has become just the opposite. Digital channels allow the customer to choose what he wants to know, where to look for the information and when. This makes it extremely important for companies to understand it's customers' interests and preferences in terms of timing and marketing channels. The traditional push model doesn't bring sufficient value to the customer anymore. Standing out from the information overload received by people nowadays, requires not only the creation of provoking messages, but offering each customer the right information at the right time through the right channel (Isokangas & Vassinen, 2010, 75-78).

Knowledge of social media networks helps to concentrate digital marketing communications to those arenas where the most potential audience spends most of their time. Companies can engage consumers in new ways by creating new types of relationships and interactions, where consumers interact with each other as well as the companies itself (Porter, Donthu, MacElroy & Wydra, 2011, 80).

According to Juslén (2011), it is important to remember that one of the key objectives of marketing is getting attention from people who contribute most to the company's business. Promoting a business can be done directly by buying the company's products / services, or indirectly, when people help the company by promoting it to other potential customers. At best, they will do both (Juslén, 2011, p. 211).

This change in the communication culture creates opportunities as well as challenges for existing operators in the market (Wunsch-Vincent & Vickery 2006, 5). One of these challenges is the fact that there are several different types of social media users. Most of the people are followers who never create any new content. The fact

that people have the opportunity to create content and take part in a conversation, does not mean that everyone would do it in an equal manner. The transition from a follower to becoming an active content creator is often big and demanding. Generally companies are able to identify the passive content consumers as well as the most active and loudest fans. This often creates problems because the majority of people fall between these two extremes (Isokangas & Vassinen, 2010, 95-100).

In the context of social media, and particularly when talking about viral phenomenon's, the concepts of deserved attention and free media are often highlighted. These are a result of the fact that network users function as volunteers when they share viral phenomenon related content, thus generating more and more people in their networks to share the content within their own networks retrospectively. Free media at its best is effective for businesses, but at the same time it is extremely difficult to make use of. In this case the key for creating successful marketing activities in social media are the users and not the companies who maintain the services. Allen stated already in the 1970's that "information gatekeepers" are individuals who positively (and informally) affect the transfer and use of information within an organization." Social media distribution networks are created by those people who use social media. They decide for themselves what kind of content is worth sharing (Juslén 2011, p. 212).

2.3 Characteristics of sharing in social media

The following section discusses the special features of sharing in social media. This can be viewed as very important information for any organization that seeks to provide content for its users to share across the Web. As presented by Figure 3, Facebook (24%), email (11.1%), and Twitter (10.8%) are among the most popular methods for sharing content on the Web today.

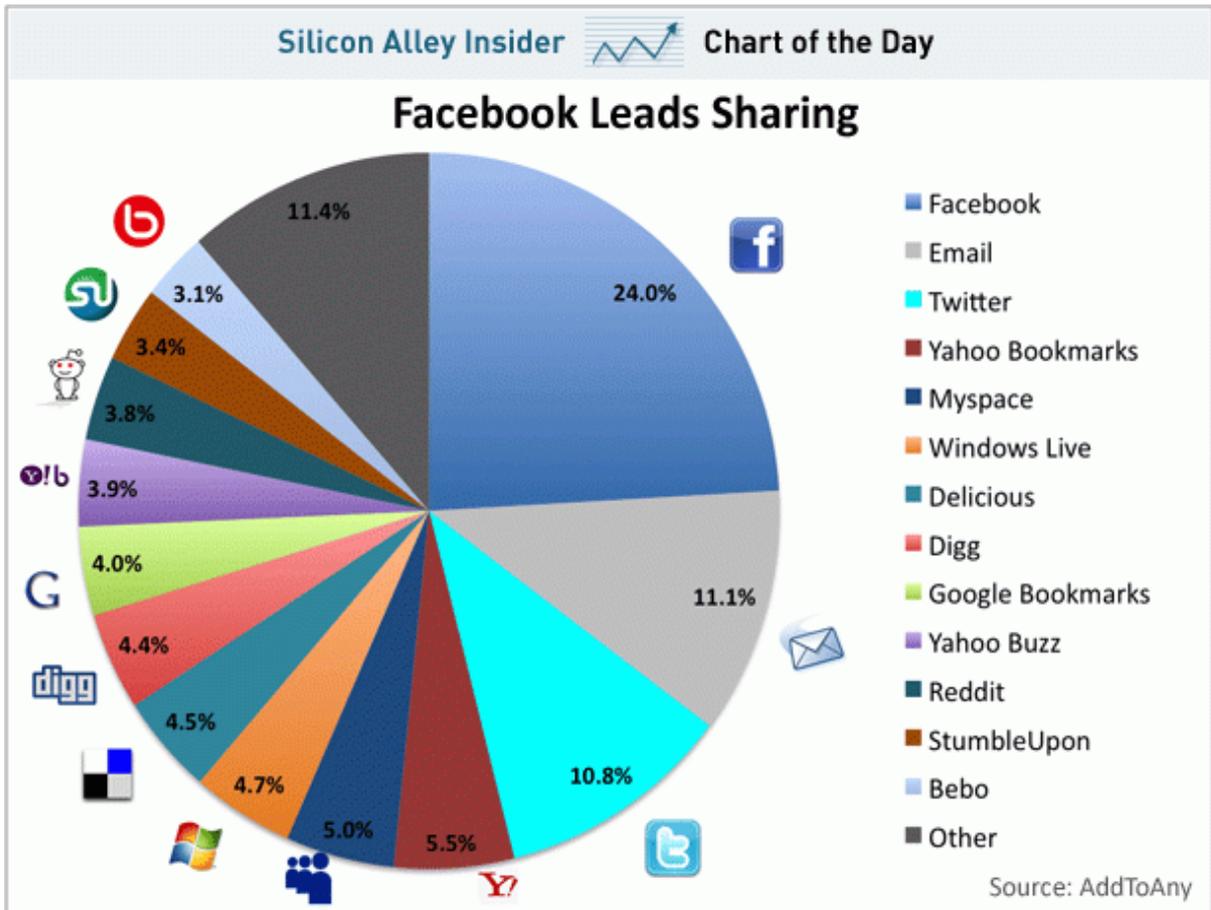


Figure 3. Chart of How people share content on the web.
 (<http://www.businessinsider.com>)

Social media is built around information sharing. Consumers feel that sharing the same media content produces a sense of bonding and affinity within the social network. Frequent exchange of information supports relationship maintenance and builds common ground between users. Social media is also used to manage self-images and to produce a desired self by selectively circulating information (Nardi 2005). According to research by Ames & Naaman, 2010, Lee & Ma, 2012, people share information to receive attention and enhance reputation and popularity among other users.

Bernstein et. Al. 2010 argue, that sharing is motivated by an assumption of what friends would like to see, but then again it is held back by concerns about spamming and misreading friends' interests. Bernstein et. Al. also state, that active information

seekers are often the most active sharers. (Bernstein et al. 2010) However, these social desires are frequently accompanied by concerns over privacy. Often people don't realize, that every interaction on social media is witnessed by an audience that tends to be larger than expected (Bernstein et al. 2013). Users were found to protect their privacy by adhering to social norms and strategic self-sensorship (Das and Kramer 2013; Sleeper et al. 2013).

The dilemma between the utility derived from social media and concerns over privacy has led researchers to call for interface designs that "simultaneously ensure privacy and promote content sharing and sociability" (Brandtzæg, Lüders, and Skjetne 2010, p. 1007). Having the option to share content online anonymously might satisfy people's need for privacy without holding back their online social behavior, however it could also have a negative effect on social relationships. (Kaiping & Kizilcec, 2014)

Sharing content online inevitably reveals personal interests and judgements. Self-disclosure is believed to induce a variety of social psychological considerations. According to Tamir and Mitchell 2012, acts of self-disclosure activate the neural region associated with primary rewarding experiences. This finding is consistent with the emotions content-sharers have reported. These kinds of emotions are primarily positive. (Goh et al. 2009).

While examining what encourages users to act in online communities, Preece (2000) discovered that knowledge of adequate data protection played a key role. Users require assurance that their private data will not be given to third parties. Online communities must have clear policies on data protection to make their members feel safe. Reciprocity can also be encouraged by rewards. For example, positive and helpful comments within the group can be taken into account to encourage community members to create good norms and values. (Preece 2000, 104. Preece & Maloney-Krichmar 2003, 21)

In 2014, Chartbeat, a company that measures real-time traffic of their customers, announced that "they have found no correlation between social shares and people actually reading" The statement was specifically about Twitter tweets but the company expects Facebook shares to reflect the same pattern. The message was, that an increase in social media shares clearly increases the amount of traffic to an

article, but there is no relationship between stories that are most heavily consumed and stories that are shared the most. (www.theverge.com)

A relationship between the number of people who choose to share a link of the content and the level of interest of the content has been found. More than often likes and retweets are seen as marks of merit and the ultimate goal of social media is affirmation of relevance. As it is seen from Figure 4, there are indicators such as scroll depth, clicks, video playback, and other metrics in order to determine whether people are actually reading the content. The data supports the theory of false retweets: users who consume about 25 percent of an article are more likely to share than users who immediately bounced away or even users who spent more time with it.

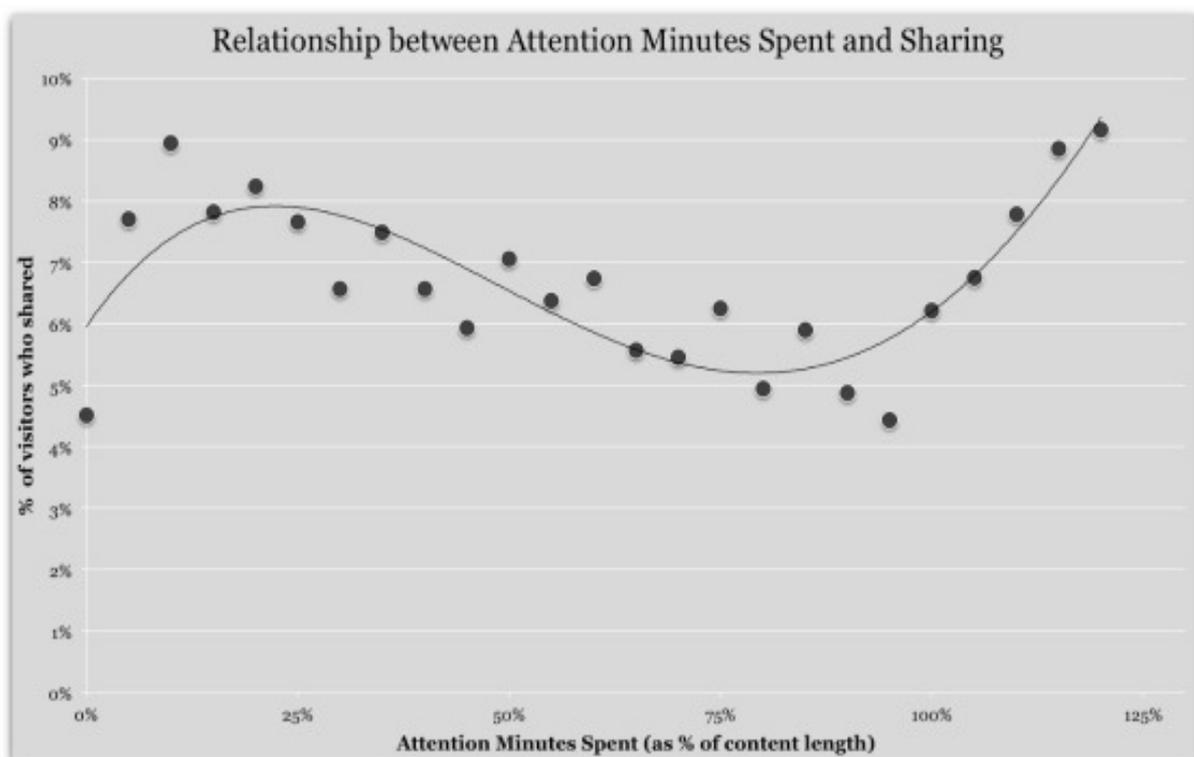


Figure 4. Upworthy’s metric of “attention minutes” (www.verge.com)

Dan Zarrella from Hootspot researched more than 2.7 million tweets that contained links. He found out that there is almost no correlation between retweets and clicks. 16 percent of the analyzed tweets generated more retweets than clicks, meaning that

many Twitter users retweet links without even taking a look at the content. (<http://www.adweek.com>)

Berger & Milkman (2011) studied how content characteristics affect virality by examining why certain pieces of online content (e.g., advertisements, videos, news articles) are more viral than others? They researched all of the *New York Times* articles published over a three-month period, to examine how emotion shapes virality. The results indicate that positive content is more viral than negative content, but the relationship between emotion and social transmission is more complex. The findings support the fact that virality is partially driven by physiological arousal. Content that evokes high-arousal positive (awe) or negative (anger or anxiety) emotions is more viral. Content that evokes low-arousal, or deactivating, emotions (e.g. sadness) is less viral. (Berger & Milkman, 2011)

However, there has been less attention to what causes virality or what drives people to share content with others and what type of content is the most likely to be shared. Word of mouth and social media are viewed as cheaper and more effective methods than traditional media, but their utility depends on people sharing content that positively promotes a brand. If no one shares a company's content or if consumers share content that portrays the company negatively, the benefit of social transmission is lost. For this reason, it can be said that, companies benefit greatly from understanding what drives people to share content. In addition it can help organizations and policy makers avoid consumer backlash and the spreading of negative content. (Berger & Milkman, 2011)

Avalon & Toch's (2013) research results show that interest in sharing a post significantly drops the more time passes since it was first published. A negative correlation between the time the information was published and its sharing preferences also exists. Avalon & Toch's findings demonstrate the decline of interest in Facebook posts in relation to sharing preferences: 89% of users would share a recent post, 81% would share a post that was published a year ago and 73% would share a post that was published two years ago. (Avalon & Toch, 2013)

3. MOA-MODEL: PREREQUISITES FOR INFLUENCING INDIVIDUAL'S INFORMATION SHARING IN SOCIAL MEDIA

The next chapter uses the MOA-model to take a deeper look into the areas in which the marketer can influence most effectively and to improve chances of getting a company's content shared in social media. The consumer behavior related MOA model was developed by Deborah MacInnis and Bernard Jaworski in 1989 to extend the theory of information processing in advertising (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989).

According to their view, there are three individual consumer characteristics affecting in the background of the information process: motivation, opportunity and ability. When all three features are present, consumers process information from advertisements more efficiently. As a result, the consumer forms certain expectations and attitudes towards the brand on a cognitive and emotional level. Therefore the role of the marketer is to improve motivation, opportunity and ability through strategic planning of advertising. (MacInnis et al., 1991).

Although the model was originally developed for processing advertising messages (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989, MacInnis et al., 1991), it has subsequently been applied to numerous other research topics. Within the subject area of consumer behavior, the MOA-model has been applied to research knowledge-sharing behavior among employees (Siemsen et. al. 2008), communication between consumers in online communities, (Gruen et al. 2005), and online communications processes (Putrevu & Lord, 2003). Clark et al. (2005) used the MOA-theory to research companies' ability to measure the effectiveness of their marketing and willingness to process this information. Xi Y. Leung & Billy Bai (2013) applied MOA-model in exploring travellers' behaviors in hotels' social media pages, while Eduardo Parra-López et. al. (2012) concentrated on technology used by travellers to share their experiences, photos etc.

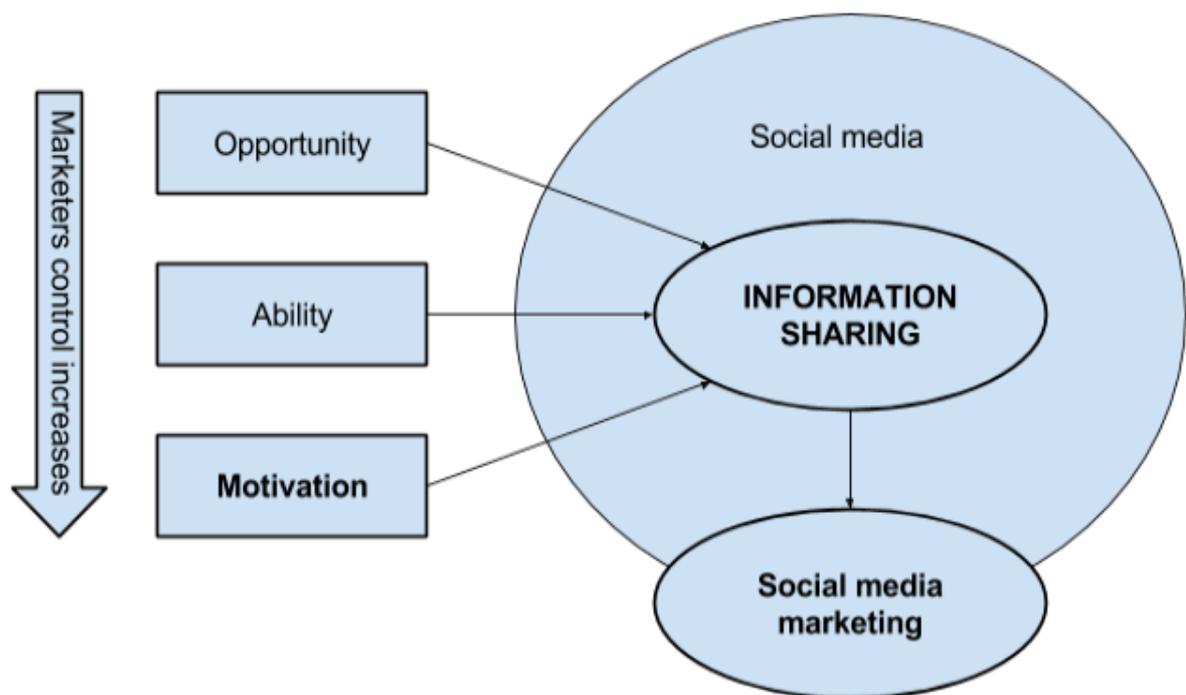


Figure 5. Framework of prerequisites for influencing individual's information sharing in social media

As presented in Figure 5, The MOA-model can be applied in this research of motivations behind sharing content to others in social media by examining the factors that affect information sharing. When motivation, ability and opportunity are taken into account, a comprehensive and wide-ranging overview of consumer behavior can be created to demonstrate the relevant background factors that a marketer can influence and invest in (Gruen et al. 2005). Figure 5 emphasizes the way marketer's hands are more tied when operating in social media than the traditional media, where the MOA-model was originally developed. The fact that users have the ultimate power to decide what information they want to share in social media has to be taken into account. Thus, influencing users' motivation to share information is the marketer's most effective tool. Succeeding in this means that the company's social media marketing efficiency improves.

Next this research will take a look at each of the MOA-model's elements in more detail - both in general and in the context of this research. MacInnis and Jaworski (1989) defined opportunity as the enabling factors of the processing of marketing messages to include the time available for processing, the number of repetitions and

the availability and quality of information among other things. In addition to these positive inducements, they have listed negative factors, which reduce the possibility of processing, such as external distractions and interfering elements in the advertisement itself. Positive enablers in sharing content as well as acquiring it in the Internet include for instance the ownership of necessary equipment and sufficient high-speed Internet access. As both hardware and access to broadband Internet has reached the critical mass and is still on the increase, the opportunity to acquire and share content in the Internet is not lost due to the lack of necessary tools. Also the anytime-anywhere nature of the Internet enhances the possibility significantly (Gruen et al. 2005). A marketer is able to influence the availability of information by search engine marketing, but the decision to share information in social media is ultimately in the hands of the user.

Negative distractions of sharing content in social media can be for example the amount of information, users of social media are exposed, which makes it necessary to compete for attention. Other challenging factors include the constant rush and lack of free time people experience during these days. A marketer has limited amounts of resources in terms of this MOA-element.

In the original MOA-study, MacInnis and Jaworski determined ability as competence or skill in interpreting brand information contained by advertisements. Inadequacy of this ability may be due to the fact that the necessary information has not been obtained previously or it cannot be currently utilized. Also, the ad's internal factors, such as the ambiguous nature of the message, may affect the ability negatively.

Hoyer and MacInnis later narrowed down the definition of ability to a more general level, calling it the use of consumer's set of resources that achieve a desired outcome. (Gruen et al. 2005). Erdelez and Rioux hypothesize already in year 2000 when their study "Sharing Information encountered for others on the web" was published that acquiring and sharing in web requires new skills and skills that users have established in other environments are not as applicable on the Web. (Erdelez&Rioux, 2000b, p. 229) In this study, from a marketer's point of view, the resources can be considered as computer and Internet skills that include skills that are needed for information acquisition. The desired outcome is reached when person

decides to share this particular information with other users in social media. As stated before in this study, a marketer has very little means to influence this process, followed by the shifting of power from the marketer to the users in social media.

One of the most significant features of the Web 2.0 is its ease of use. This is reflected in the software and user interfaces for constantly changing towards more intuitive and user-friendly. People from children to the elderly are able not only to surf the Internet, but participate in social media in different ways by creating content but also sharing it and by doing that they could help the company to distribute their content to as many users as possible. The question for the marketer is how to raise consumer interest, or motivation.

In addition to opportunity and ability, motivation is needed to change the consumer's ways of thinking. MacInnis and Jaworski (1989) defined motivation as a desire to process the advertisement's brand information. The definitions include descriptions of a number of other studies of the state of preparedness, consent, interest and desire (MacInnis et al. 1991). In this particular research motivation refers to the desire to share the information with others in different social media platforms.

From a marketer's point of view motivation is the most challenging element of the MOA, yet the most interesting. Understanding the factors of motivation is not straightforward or easy as there are usually many and they vary according to circumstances. On the other hand, identifying the motivational factors provides the marketer a very good starting point to influence the consumer's behavior. When the first two elements of the MOA-model already exist, motivation is the finalizing factor that determines whether the consumer shares the content or not.

According to Bishop, understanding individuals' motivations for participation is the key to a successful online community (Bishop 2007, 1881). Similarly, if the first step towards a successful business-oriented online community is the understanding of consumer's needs and motivations, this same idea can also be applied to users' information sharing behavior. Individuals' willingness to share information can be approached by looking at consumer's needs and motivations to share information. The next chapter will explore the concept of motivation in more depth.

4. MOTIVATIONS

4.1 The definition of motivation

This chapter introduces the term motivation and examines where it stems from. In addition, internal and external motivations are explained thoroughly.

The term motivation is used to describe factors, which create and control behavior. The concept of motivation is also explained by strength and continuity; how high is the level of motivation and how continuous is the behavior. However, these two factors do not always go hand in hand. (Petri & Govern 2004,16). In other words, motivation activates a person to function. The activating properties of motivation appear either as visible, continuous or intense behavior. The absence of visible behavior does not automatically translate into lack of motivation. More continuous or intense behavior usually refers to higher level of motivation (Petri & Govern 2004, 18 to 19).

Motives adjust and maintain individual's general behavior in certain directions or in other words makes a person to choose certain type of behavior instead of another (Petri & Govern 2004, 19). A person can direct their behavior either towards or away from something. (Kardes et al., 2011,182). Often, when talking about motives, people refer to needs, desires, instincts and internal incentives as well as punishments and rewards. Motives are either unconscious or conscious and always goal-oriented. (Ruohotie 1998, 36.) Motivation is also used to describe why a particular behavior occurs in a given situation, but not in other situations (Franken, 2007, 4; Petri & Govern 2004, 16).

4.2 Foundations of motivation

Motivation is composed of needs, values and motives. A need can be defined as an internal imbalance, which affects a person's desire to achieve a perfect balance. Often motivation and motives are connected to needs. A person cannot choose or decide his needs, but can be aware of them. Whenever the environment presents something that could possibly satisfy a need, a person begins motivated behavior (Malmberg, L-E & Little, T.D. 2002, 128.).

Motivation arises whenever an individual has a need that needs to be satisfied. Needs should not be confused with desires as needs are born automatically and are necessary for human survival. Desires are learned indicators of needs. Needs can be divided into two categories: primary and secondary needs. Primary needs include physical needs that are innate to humans, such as water, air, food and security. Secondary needs are psychological needs such as the need for affection, company, self-esteem and intellectual stimulation (Kardes et al., 2011, 181.).

Individual's sources of internal motivation can be different needs, emotions or cognitions, which control behavior. In addition to physiological needs, there are also psychological and social needs. Emotions refer to the operation of controlling emotions and cognitions are various internal communication processes, such as setting of targets. Environmental factors are external events, which can act as clues to an individual and provoke action (Reeve 2009, 114). The arousal of cognitions are usually linked to the environment, since most situations and environmental stimuli evoke thoughts of needs (Kardes ym. 2011, 181.).

When a need arises, a person tends to either mitigate or eliminate the need. Consequently, motivations focus attention to the target and thus generate behavior. Targeting attention, which is caused by motivation, means that the appreciation of certain things either increases or decreases (Kardes ym. 2011, 182.).

4.3 Internal and external motivation

Internal and external motivations differ in the way motives activate and direct behavior. Motivation can be studied from different dimensions. The most common and known method is to divide it into internal and external motivation. Researchers define internal and external motivations in a different manner depending on what aspects they emphasize while differentiating internal and external rewards. The most apparent difference between internal and external motivation is the fact that the former's causes of behavior are internal while external motivation is dependent on the environment. These two factors are always connected to each other. External motivation can be attained very quickly, but if it doesn't arouse inner motivation, it can degrade very quickly. Internal and external motivation occurs most often at the same time complementing each other. In spite of this, some motives may dominate others (Peltonen & Ruohotie 1992.18., Ruohotie 1998, 37-38).

Many researchers have also compared internal motivation to curiosity. It has been suggested, that curiosity leads to searching for information, which purpose is to find knowledge that eliminates or reduce uncertainty. Self-realization and personal development are often related to internal motivation. Good examples of internal awards are also versatility and meaningfulness of work. Internal awards are often long-lasting and are usually more effective than external rewards. Flow state can be achieved through inner motivations. In that case a person becomes completely absorbed in the ongoing act so that sense of time and space disappears (Füller 2006, (Kansanen & Uusikylä 2002, 27, Ruohotie 1998, 38). Ryan & Deci (2000) define internal motivation as something that gets done because of gratification rather than some specific consequence. An internally motivated person acts because it is fun or challenging, not because of external pressure or rewards (Ryan & Deci 2000a, 56, 65.).

External motivation occurs when a person is motivated by external factors such as recognition, money, glory or punishment. External awards are objective and they appear often in the form of objects or events. External rewards are often gained from work environment and they are provided by the organization, such as salary, support

or encouragement. External rewards are not as long lasting as internal rewards and therefore has limited effectiveness (Ruohotie 1998, 37-41). External motivators can either strengthen or weaken internal motivation. Internal motivations are strengthened by such external motivations that increase the sense of competence and the need of finding creative solutions. However, status and promotions are such external motivators that undermine internal motivation (Füller 2006.).

Internal motives are usually more efficient to activate and direct behavior than external motives, because external motives are shorter than internal motivations. Internal motives can also become a permanent source of motivation. In addition, people tend to be more energetic and satisfied when they are internally motivated. The intensity of internal motivation is affected by the independency and freedom of choice, belongingness and feelings of acceptance and being successful (Kardes ym. 2011, 184, Ruohotie 1998, 39).

4.4 Factors affecting participation in social network communities

Social media is often called as online communities and sharing content in social networks, such as Facebook, therefore it can be considered as participating in an online community. As stated before in this study, the use of social media is largely about sharing content. Every user has their own view of what the term sharing includes. Generally sharing is thought to be the sharing of photos, videos and articles. Similarly the sharing of personal thoughts through discussions, observations and opinions publicly is sharing content in social media. In this case, the shared content is not produced by others, but the user itself. Commenting on other people's photos or status updates fall in the same category. Despite all this, motivations for content sharing as a form of participation in online communities has in fact not been researched specifically.

However, several researchers have studied what motivates people to join online communities (Dholakia, Bagozzi & Pearo, 2004; Pentina, Prybutok & Zhang 2008). Previous studies have also focused on finding reasons why people do not participate

in online communities rather than research the reasons why active users constantly share information and experiences in online communities (Bishop 2006, 1.).

The studies reveal that people join social networks because of similar interests and values. Dholakia et al. (2004) study examines social identification in online communities. It explains, among other things, people's motives and needs when joining social networks. These motives are, for example, provision of psychological support, meeting like minded people, making new friends, socializing and networking, as well as discussing about similar interests (Dholakia et.al. 2004).

Personal goals and needs seem to play a crucial role in influencing individuals' online communication and interaction. While communicating online, people can be classified in different groups according to their objectives. One way is to divide people into those who use the internet to support and develop sociality and to those who use the internet to support anti-social activities. (Pentina et.all. 2008) Pentina et al. (2008) presented in their article a variety of motivational factors when joining online communities. One aspect is to study peoples' commitment to online community from a practical, functional as well as from an emotional point of view. Functionality, in this context, means that the virtual community is of high quality, functionally clear, systematic and logical. Functionality, social benefits and pleasure are factors that affect the commitment to an online community.

According to Leimeister and Krcmar (2004), women are more motivated to engage in social interaction in virtual communities than men. Chan et al. (2004) believes that self-esteem, feeling of community and recognition will have a positive impact in joining online communities. It seems that helping and individuals reputation act as strong motivational factors when joining social networks. Also confidence plays an important role in joining online communities and in exchanging information with other users. (Wasko and Faraj, 2005, Ridings et al. 2002). Wang and Fesenmaier (2003) in turn, identified four motivational factors that have an impact on the individual's contribution in virtual communities: the opportunity to influence, status, being able to help and enthusiasm. In addition, the ease of communication and user's personality are also important issues in terms of activity in social networks.

According to Pentina et. al. (2008), different needs such as functional, social, psychological and hedonistic needs influence the activities in an online community. Different age groups also have different needs that motivate them to participate in online communities (Pentina et. al. 2008). Hsu et al. (2007) argues that personal expectations have a significant impact on an individual's behavior, especially when talking about sharing personal know-how. Trust based on knowledge leads to identifying confidence following online community members to being able to get to know each other.

According to Preece & Maloney-Krichmar (2003), an individual who does not need to participate in social networking activities either doesn't like the group, doesn't know how to use the software correctly, wants to study the group more or feels that he was already useful enough. Participation in online communities is based on the beliefs and activities of the individual. The reason why members do not want to participate can be caused, for example, by an unpleasant experience, such as negative comments etc. Negative experiences can reduce a person's interest to participate in social networking activities. Although targets are closely related to individual's activity in social networks, they don't have an affect on individual's personal choices (Bishop, 2006,1- 2).

5. RIOUX'S FRAMEWORK OF INFORMATION ACQUIRING-AND-SHARING (IA&S) IN INTERNET-BASED ENVIRONMENTS

In addition to researching the motivations behind sharing, another purpose of this study is to research how well Rioux's framework of information acquiring and sharing behavior in internet environments applies in the social media. When researching information behavior, motivations that drive behavior play an important role. Rioux's work takes a social science approach in creating the grounded theory, which studies individual user's acquiring and sharing behaviors in Internet based environments. Rioux's framework to study information behavior consists of information needs,

motivation, cognition and effects as well as the examination of what kind of processes are associated with IA&S behavior.

Information acquiring and sharing behaviors have received little attention in the human information behavior literature. Rioux (2000) and Erdelez and Rioux (2000,2004) provide some insight on the matter, but besides that there is very little information to be found. However, information acquiring and sharing behaviors have been studied in non-Web electronic environments. In his study, Rioux argues that one reason why information sharing in network environments has been studied more as a group phenomenon, rather than on an individual level, is that IA&S behaviors are fundamentally social behaviors, that occurs mostly in the workplace. (Rioux, 2004, 3)

5.1 The process of information acquiring

One of the two primary components of Rioux's IA&S theory is information acquisition. He suggests that "The behavior of seeking information is driven by a purposeful goal that has to be fulfilled. For the most part, Information Science literature claims that human behavior is considered to be an active pursuit of information. Generally literature related to the subject area refers information behaviors to as information seeking or information searching. (Rioux, 2004, 14; Wilson, 2000)

However, there are also other ways to obtain information that is non-directed, casual or non-specific. Rioux notes, that although the primary emphasis has been on active searching. Wilson (1999) notes that, these other forms of observable information behaviors include "passive attention, passive search, and ongoing search". (Rioux, 2004, 15, Wilson, 1999)

In his theory Rioux also includes "information encountering" as one of the forms of information acquiring. The term "information encountering", introduced by Erdelez (1995) is actually a process in which people often find information when they're not looking for it or they happen to find something else than the information they were

looking for. The interesting aspect of Information Encountering is that the information needs addressed by encountering may not be the needs of the user who encounters a given piece of information. The other interesting aspect is that the encountered information may suit the needs of other people whom the user knows. (Erdelez&Rioux, 2000)

This view is also shared by Bettman (1978, p.35) with the following statement: "Information can be acquired by actively seeking it while engaged in some choice process, or by being confronted with it during the course of other activities." According to Rioux (2000, 16), a more broadened concept of information behavior should be introduced with specific notions of information seeking, searching and retrieval. As a result, the term "information acquisition" now covers all ways of obtaining information.

Rioux explains how users are linked to their motivations to acquire information in internet-based environments. A strong driver of information acquiring behavior is the feeling associated with the need to satisfy curiosity. Information acquiring is also driven by the needs and desires to educate oneself about everyday topics such as news, trends, culture, consumer products etc. Rioux also notes, that users acquire information to satisfy their own needs and motivations as well as the needs and motivations of other people. This type of behavior results in a holistic view of human nature. (K. E. Fisher & L. Mc.Kechnie, 2005, 171)

Rioux explains that the process of information acquisition can be active, directed, and purposeful as well as passive, non-directed and non-specific. Information acquisition of IA&S in Internet-based environment is similar to information acquisition in other environments. This means that information is acquired through a mix of different ways. It can be acquired in a directed manner, which means purposeful searching, semi-directedly, which in another words is information encountering or in an undirected process, that means the information is received by someone. (Rioux, 2004, 131)

Rioux's research claims, that most of the information that is shared online is acquired from the internet, but other ways also exist. Information is acquired and shared most

often through e-mails and electronic mailing lists. More importantly, Rioux finds the connection between the time spent in the Internet and the frequency of IA&S behavior. (Rioux, 2004, 131)

5.2. The process of information sharing

Information sharing is the second behavioral element of IA&S in Internet-based environments. Lave and Wenger (1991) state that Information sharing is often conceptualized in the context of social and organizational learning. According to them, learning takes primarily place through engagement in social exchanges and practices. For example, when people come together to pursue shared goals, they create informal “communities of practice” where learning and information sharing takes place. (Lave & Wenger, 1991)

Rioux’s study also finds out how the ease of sharing has had an impact on it. When sharing information, users prefer to use email because of its convenience. Emails are considered to be fast, easy, efficient, as well as cheap. Users also appreciated the scannability and asynchronous nature of emails. (Rioux, 2004, 131)

The process of sharing itself is relatively straightforward. Rioux points out that normally users keep their email clients and Internet browsers open at the same time while being online. When users acquire information they consider useful, they just skip back and forth between applications, normally copying an URL of the page that is considered useful into an email. Before clicking the send-button, users easily pick the receiver from an integrated email address book. When receiving an email, that users would like to share, they simply forward it with an explanatory note. These notes play a significant part to keep all the information whether it is received, shared or acquired in order. (Rioux, 2004, 132)

Rioux’s study shows that user’s information sharing behavior is being motivated by both internal and external factors. Social, emotional and relationship needs can be considered as internal factors, also called as personal factors. Rioux lists workplace

directives, school norms and imposed searches as examples of external factors, also called as environmental factors. The motivation to share information depends also on the user's individual role at the given time. (Rioux, 2004, 132-133)

Users are mostly unaware of the cognitive states they experience during information acquiring and sharing processes. However, Rioux's findings show that an inherent consistent cognitive storage-and-recall process is part of the behavior. Although the process is quite complex, it requires very little effort on the part of the user. The IA&S process is quick and pleasant and it arouses positive feelings in the user.

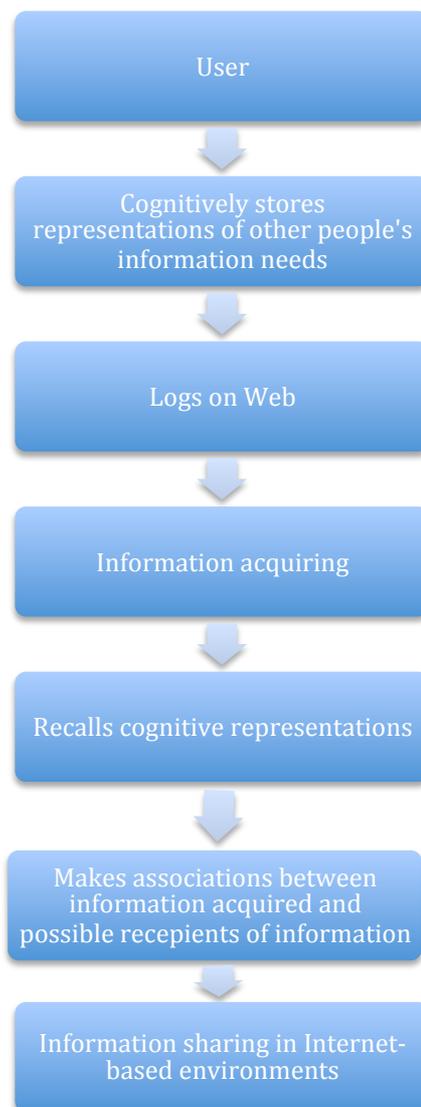


Figure 6. Framework of process of information acquiring and sharing in internet-based environments.

Figure 6 shows an illustration of how human mind works during the process of information acquiring and sharing in internet-based environments. The average scenario of using the Internet begins when an individual logs onto the web, finds (or does not find) the needed information and then logs off. Sometimes these behavioral scenarios can be different, or more complex. For instance, the individual finds the information needed and realizes the information can be of interest or useful to some familiar person and subsequently shares the information with that person one way or the other. The multitude of information and acquiring scenarios suggests that the shared content may or may not be linked to the initial search task. (Rioux 2004)

The process of IA&S begins with different kinds of communication and social interaction that users have with their family, friends, colleagues etc. in different contexts. These memories, or “results” of communication, are then placed in the user’s potential memory during every day communication events. The communication involves cognitive representations of the people, the topics discussed, needs mentioned and feelings experienced in these conversations. These representations remain passive until a user acquires information of certain quality, for example interest in new internet-based environments. This is characterized as breaching a cognitive threshold, which quickly activates a cognitive trigger. (Karen E. Fisher et. al., 2005)

As the users recall cognitive representations stored in the potential memory space, they experience a variety of mental states. The user then makes associations between the information acquired and possible recipients of this information. These memories include mental images of the information recipient’s faces, voices and acquired or stored topics. Ultimately, the process of recalling and associating information sets off information sharing behavior. The process might seem complicated, but in fact it takes place so rapidly, that users have very little mental awareness of these events. This suggests that the processes take place subconsciously. (Karen E. Fisher et. al., 2005)

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE EMPIRICAL PART OF STUDY

6.1 Data collection

The participants of this study were selected because of their high level of activity in the web. As the table below (Figure 7) shows, it can be acknowledged that social media attracts first and foremost adolescents and young adults. 83% of 16-24 year olds and 76% of 25-34 year olds have registered as a member of a social media community. In the age group of 35-44 year olds, only 44% were registered members. The interest in social media communities in older age groups is very limited. (Tietojärjestelmien käyttö -tutkimus 2010, Tilastokeskus)

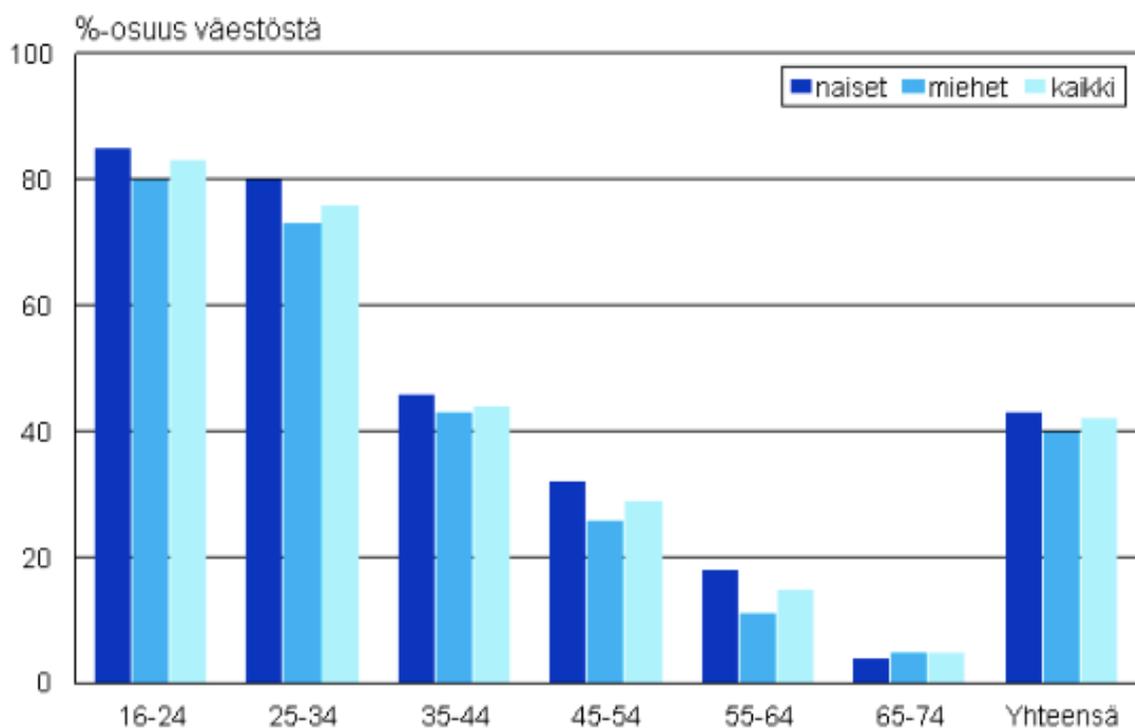


Figure 7. Registering in online social communities in Finland in 2010. (Statistics Finland 2014)

Registering to an Internet community does not automatically stand for the active use of community services. Some people register due to mere curiosity or by receiving an invitation from a familiar user. However, registering to the service does not automatically lead to using the service actively. But as it is seen in figure 4, which

represents the activity of following an online community, community services are used quite commonly especially by young people. Eight per cent of the Finnish population follows some online community several times a day. In addition, one fifth of the population follows an online community on a daily basis. In general, young people use social networks as part of their social life. Almost every fifth person between the ages of 16-24 follows an online community several times a day and 44% follow on a daily basis. In the age group of 25-34-year-olds the corresponding figures are only slightly lower. In the age groups above 35 year olds, the active use of online services is limited.

	Useita kertoja päivässä			Päivittäin			Viikoittain			Harvemmin			Ei seuraa enää
	Miehet	Naiset	Kaikki	Miehet	Naiset	Kaikki	Miehet	Naiset	Kaikki	Miehet	Naiset	Kaikki	Kaikki
16-24	19	27	23	43	46	44	15	8	12	4	3	3	1
25-34	13	20	16	44	44	44	9	10	9	5	7	6	1
35-44	5	10	7	17	19	18	13	10	11	7	5	6	1
45-54	1	2	2	8	11	10	8	8	8	7	9	8	2
55-64	1	2	1	2	6	4	5	4	4	3	6	4	1
65-74	0	1	0	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	0	1	0
Yhteensä	6	10	8	19	21	20	9	7	8	5	5	5	1

Figure 8. User activity of online social communities in Finland in 2010 (Statistics Finland 2014)

According to the table above (Figure 8), the most active social media users are the age groups of 16-24 and 25-34 year olds. For the purposes of this research it must be taken into account, that according to Rioux's theory, one of the main reasons for IA & S behavior is that it is work related. Because of this, the age group of 16-24 year olds be will be excluded from this study. The participant's age limit is based on the fact that it can be assumed that 25 year olds are already involved in working life. In the younger age group of 16-24 year olds, it is likely that only part of the respondents

are actively involved in working life, which could consequently distort the research results

All in all, 12 respondents were interviewed for this study, five of whom were women and seven were men. The number was found to be sufficient since the data began to repeat itself, meaning that the data brought by new informants would not produce any meaningful information in terms of the research problem. At this point it also became evident that the data did not differ much from the data Rioux had received. The study was able to reach saturation because it is based on Rioux's theory and therefore already had an implication of what kind of data this study is looking for.

All respondents were Finnish citizens. The youngest respondent was 25 years old and the oldest 34. All of the respondents are registered users on Facebook. Most of the interviewees also have Twitter accounts. However, the majority only uses Twitter to follow other users and do not publish any personal content.

The respondents were selected from the interviewer's personal social network by inquiring their interest to participate in such a study. The interviewees were told the purpose of the interview, the topic, the estimated duration and conditions for participation. This was made to ascertain that all participants met the required criteria. All respondents were previously acquainted with the interviewer. This fact may to some extent reduce the reliability of the research, but on the other hand talking with a familiar person is often experienced as easier than being interviewed by a stranger. This was the most simplest and quickest way to find participants for the research.

Since the interviewees were not rewarded for participation in any way, it can be assumed that they did so from pure good will. Although the purposeful sample has been taken from the researcher's personal network, the selected individuals have very different backgrounds. The respondents are from different age groups and include students, parents, professionals from the working life etc., which offers versatility for the collected data.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the summer of 2015. Seven of the interviews were conducted individually and two were carried out as group interviews,

where all together 5 people were interviewed in groups of two and three. The group interviews were carried out because of lack of time and the chosen method was the only way to conduct the interviews. Each interview was recorded with the permission of the interviewees and transcribed afterwards. Individual interviews lasted on average 20 minutes and group interviews 35-50 minutes.

The framework of the interview, as well as the questions, can be found from Appendix 1. The questions of the themed interview were largely based on Rioux's research, whereas questions regarding social media were also added. Before the actual interviews were carried out, one preliminary interview was conducted to test the functionality of the structure and wording as well as the duration of the interview. Based on the results of the preliminary interview some changes were made in the structure.

The semi-structured interview sought to obtain answers for the research questions of this study. Although this research primarily focuses to find out the motives behind content sharing in social media. Like Rioux's work, this interview also began by collecting personal data of the interviewees. This type of data was important, because personality, or the way a person sees himself, has an influence on person's values. Similarly, personal interests influence the motives to seek certain type of information. This question also verifies the diversity of the group of interviewees. These issues were brought up by asking the interviewees to list three roles that describe themselves best, such as work title, hobbies, relationships etc.

The next step was to investigate how much time the interviewees spend on the Internet and how much of that time is spent in the social media. The responses give an insight to how big proportion of the time currently spent in the Internet is actually used in the social media. In addition, the respondents were asked what social media applications they prefer.

Even though the main goal of this study is to find the motivations behind sharing content in social media, the reader should be reminded that the content/information that is being shared has to be acquired first. Because there is a clear connection between these two, and because the study aimed in testing deductively Rioux's IA & S framework in a social media environment, it would have been impossible to

overlook the acquisition of information part of Rioux's framework and to focus only on sharing information in Internet-based environments. In addition, it is noted that Rioux's IA & S framework is so wide, that including it as a whole would not have served this study's purpose.

The next part of the interview was to find out the specific information acquiring and sharing processes associated with information acquiring-and-sharing in Internet-based environments. The concept of acquiring information was included in this interview to search what kinds of processes are associated with it. The aim was to find out where and how the interviewees find the information they share and what type of content and how often they find information that they share. In practice this was done by asking the interviewees where they normally find the type of information they share in the Internet.

Due to the objectives of the study, the interview focused more on the processes related to sharing and the needs and motivations behind them. The interviewees were asked what type of content and information they share. The interviewees were asked to provide concrete examples of the content they have last shared. In addition, the interviewer was also interested to know what kind of content the interviewees avoid sharing. The act of knowingly not sharing something can be considered as part of sharing in a way that it would go against the type of image or status people want to share of themselves.

The interviewees were also asked what channels they use in the internet to share information and content to others. This gives information of the channels that users currently prefer and if there has been any changes since Rioux's study. The interviewees were introduced to a variety of scenarios and asked whether these scenarios happened to the interviewees themselves. The interviewees were presented by the same scenarios as in Rioux's work, in order to seek confirmation for Rioux's observations on how people's information searching and sharing is affected by the needs of others.

They were also asked if they primarily share information and content that interests themselves or information and content that interests others. Motivations and needs for sharing were also surveyed by asking the interviewees to describe what happens

in their mind at the very moment when they find something that they know would interest someone else. After the answer for the previous questions was received, the interviewees were asked whether these feelings were difficult to put in words. Finally, the interviewees were asked if they thought this type of action was impulsive and unconscious. These questions can either confirm or overturn Rioux's results whether the IA & S behavior is unconscious. The interviewees were also asked directly for the reasons why they share information to others on the Internet and what motivates them to share information and/or content online. They were also asked to describe how it makes them feel.

The third section of the interview focused on social media and sharing. The aim was to get a picture of what kind of features social media brings to sharing in internet-based environments. The interviewees were asked to whom they share content on social media and how they share it. In other words, do they share information to one person, a few people or large groups at a time. They were also questioned about how often they share content in social media and whether there are some things that limit sharing. In addition the interviewees were also asked what kind of content they avoid sharing in social media. Finally, the interviewees were asked if they shared content in the internet before social media and how social media has influenced their sharing behavior online.

6.2 Data analysis

The research material describes the studied phenomenon and the purpose of the analysis is to create a clear description of the phenomenon being studied (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 113). Qualitative analysis consists of simplifying observations and solving the research problem. Simplifying observations means that the data is being examined from one specific or several different perspectives. A large number of data is simplified to a more manageable entity by combining interpretations and searching for common features. (Alasuutari 2011, 38–40.)

The first phase of a theory-based content analysis is to form a framework for the analysis (Sarajärvi, 2002). For this purpose, Rioux's framework of Information acquiring and sharing in internet-based environments was selected. This was followed by simplifying the data in accordance of the content analysis. In a deductive content analysis, categories are defined according to previous information and content is sought from corresponding data. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009,114). This study's categories are largely derived from the research questions, which in turn are based on parts of Rioux's framework. In addition, social media and how it affects content sharing forms its own category.

The purpose of this study was to test whether the process of acquiring information in Internet-based environments works as Rioux described in his research on the part that it is an unconscious process, affected by the needs of others than just the person seeking for new information. In addition, the second and third category constitutes the main research topic of this study, that is what motivates people to share content in social media. The process has been divided into two, so that motivation is studied more broadly to see if the data corresponds with Rioux's framework and the content analysis category is formed by social media.

Transcribing data was carried out in the second phase. The purpose of transcribing data is to help the researcher to understand what the people involved in the research have wanted to express. Transcribing means the act of putting thoughts, speech or data in a written form. Transcribing is done according to the research task, making each material unique. Therefore, a correct way of transcribing can not be determined. (Metsämuuronen 2006, 88, 122, 262.)

Rioux used the means of thematic analysis to analyze motivations behind information sharing. Rioux's themes were raised from his research data. A theory-based analysis proceeds from the general to the private, at which concepts are created from existing theories to be used in the analysis. (Kansanen 2002, 91). Thematic analysis is characterized by what has been said about each theme. The data is broken down and searched for certain characteristics that describe the theme. The themes itself function as a structure for the data. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 93). Thus, it is only natural that this study also uses thematic analysis as a mean for analyzing data.

The next phase was to pick the information that had arisen from the analysis to form the framework. All data, that was excluded from the framework, was also recovered and saved. To be able to test Rioux's research, the starting point for analyzing the data that was received in this study, had to be fitted into the same themes that Rioux had in his research. In doing so, it is possible to investigate if the data received from this research suits the existing themes and how much new information arises that cannot be placed into the themes. As the analysis progressed, it became increasingly important to remember how important it is to stay within the research boundaries, despite the fact that new and interesting things were brought up, but it was decided that they should be ignored.

In his research, Rioux organized his findings into 6 areas of inquiry. These areas of inquiry are as follows:

- Internet users' perceived cognitive and affective states as they mentally "store" and recall what they believe are the information needs of others;
- The needs and motivations that prompt information acquisition processes associated with IA&S in Internet-based environments;
- The specific information acquisition processes associated with IA&S in Internet-based environments;
- Needs and motivations that prompt information sharing processes associated with IA&S in Internet-based environments;
- The specific information sharing processes associated with IA&S in Internet-based environments;
- Internet users' perceived cognitive and affective states as they use various processes to share information that they believe is of interest to someone they know. (Rioux, 2004, p. 45-46)

The purpose of this study is to find the answer to the primary research question. Therefore, of the areas of inquiries mentioned above, this research focuses on number 4: Needs and motivations that prompt information sharing processes associated with IA&S in Internet-based environments. Other areas of inquiries will not be researched as a whole, but they are applied to be able to find answers for the secondary research questions. In practice, this will be achieved by raising the matters from the areas of enquiries that are believed to have an impact on

motivations behind sharing content. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 92.) Things that have been excluded from this study due to its limitations, have been brought up in the discussion section, where further research opportunities are presented.

6.3 Research findings

Respondent demographics show that the respondents often spend over 10 hours in the internet during the day and most of it in social media. The issue was researched with an open question and therefore large scale statistical data is unavailable. However, it can be said that Internet usage has significantly increased during the past years when compared to Rioux's findings. In this study, only two out of twelve (17%) respondents described their daily use of the internet as only a couple of hours, whereas the rest ten out of twelve respondents described their use of the internet on a daily basis as extensive. Although the answers were formulated in a variety of ways, the same message was repeated over and over again. For example:

"I'm in the internet practically the entire time I'm awake. Half of the time I spend on the Internet is due to my work, the other half is my spare time. "

"Every day dozens of times."

"Each day at least four hours, which makes 28 hours per week."

Time spent in social media received comments such as:

"At least half of the time spent on the internet."

"I'm there all the time. Whenever I'm awake I have to go and see what's happening in the social media."

"Social media is on in the background all the time"

For comparison, according to Rioux's findings "almost one-fifth (13/67 or 19%) spend five or more hours per day using Internet sources such as the Web, email, intranets, and online databases for work, school, personal projects and entertainment. Over three- fourths (51/67 or 76%) of survey respondents spend at least two hours per day using these sources. " Although the respondents of this study may interpret an open question in many different ways, it can still be argued that the use of Internet has grown considerably over the last 11 years, which exists between this and Rioux's research.

When asked what social media applications the respondents use, all declared to be registered users of Facebook. The second most popular social media application was Twitter, which was used by six out of twelve respondents. The same amount of users was also registered to LinkedIn. Many of the interviewees also wanted to mention that they don't tweet themselves, but follow other Twitter users. Only one responded used Instagram. Other social media applications that were mentioned included Reddit, Nimenhuuto, Pinterest, Snapchat and Whatsapp .

The respondents were asked to name three different roles that describe themselves best. The question aimed to collect demographic information that indicates information behavior contexts related to life roles. The responses varied greatly, but many similar roles that are considered important also emerged. The most frequently mentioned roles were a father, spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, a good friend, sports enthusiast, a business man and a funny guy. In addition, the respondents described themselves as an entrepreneur, do-gooder, promoter, nerd, the dog owner's brother, a student and an environmentalist. The responses show that the life roles of the respondents are diverse, which adds to the trustworthiness of this study.

The respondents were also questioned about what kind of information they prefer to share and what they avoid sharing in social media. This was done by presenting the following questions:

- 1) What kind of information are you likely to share with others in social media?
- 2) Is there any kind of information that you are not likely to share in social media?

The type of information the respondents share form the following categories:

- Employment
- Jokes and humor
- Sports
- Hobbies
- Health
- Music
- Ideas
- Consumer items
- Daily news
- Academics
- Curiosity
- History
- Politics

Quotes from the respondents:

"I share the type of content other people expect me to share."

"I only share the type of content that fits into my self-image that I'm trying to build in social media."

"I think a lot if this is the kind of content that people expect me to share."

The findings of this study cover 13 out 24 of the categories that occurred in Rioux's research. Given that the number of interviewees in Rioux's research was over five times more compared to this study, the results are quite natural. It is also worth to note that categorizing data can be subjective. In addition, the fact that Rioux's interviews were conducted in English, whereas this study's interviews were conducted in Finnish and later translated into English, may also have an impact on the results.

Information and content that the respondents avoid sharing:

- Politics
- Negative things
- Opinions

- Information that is too personal

Quotes from the respondents:

"I acknowledge the fact that political statements can label me."

"Political statements without revealing my personal opinion."

"I don't share anything that would damage the image I want to present of myself on the Internet."

The following section discusses those areas of inquiries from Rioux's research that help this study to reach the assigned objectives. At this point, the data is assessed to see how well it complies with the themes and conclusions in Rioux's research. Two areas of inquiries from Rioux's framework are left out: The needs and motivations that prompt information acquisition processes associated with information acquiring and sharing in internet-based environments and internet users' perceived cognitive and affective states as they use various processes to share information that they believe is of interest to someone they know. The first area of inquiry is eliminated primarily because the purpose of this work is to find out the needs and motivations behind sharing information and not the needs and motivations behind information acquisition. The latter is left out due to the time and space restrictions set for this work.

Area of Inquiry 1: Internet Users' Perceived Cognitive and Affective States as They Mentally "Store" and Recall What They Believe are the Information Needs of Other

Rioux's objective for this area of inquiry was to collect data from the interviewees' on how they perceived cognitive and affective states as they proceeded through the process of mentally "storing" and recalling information that they believe is valuable for others.

Even though the study's primary focus is the motivations behind information and content sharing online, it was considered important to know how acquiring information affects information sharing. One of the things that would affect sharing, is when the needs of others have an affect on user's sharing information behavior. For that reason it had to be made sure that this kind of "mental storing" really existed. In another words, this study is not focused on the specific process of mentally storing the information needs of others, but to test if this kind of process exists. For this reason the interviewees had to be asked two questions - the same that Rioux asked from his interviewees.

1. Describe to me what happens in your mind when you find something that you think may be of use to someone you know. Could you tell me an example of the information you have found for someone?

2. How do you feel when you find something that you think may be of use to someone you know?

The data received from the interviewees for this study confirm the following four themes from this area of inquiry from Rioux's research:

Theme 1: Mentally "storing" the information needs of others is a process dependent on communication.

Theme 2: Respondents have low top-of-mind awareness of their cognitive states during the storage-and-recall process.

Theme 3: Potential Memory is evidenced.

Theme 4: The storage-and-recall process is reportedly a natural and pleasant experience.

The questions proved to be challenging in the sense that the interviewees had difficulties to describe their feelings. The interviewees clearly knew what they wanted to say, but the answers were difficult to put into words. These findings confirm Rioux's findings: "Among the respondents, there is relatively low top-of-mind

awareness of the cognitive states they experience as they mentally “store” and recall what they believe are the information needs of others.” Furthermore, the need for follow-up questions and clarification from the interviewer confirms the findings even further.

The interviewees' repeatedly answered that the needs of others becomes apparent through discussions and it doesn't matter how long ago the discussion took place. The discussion might have taken place yesterday or a month ago. One of the respondents said, that he is too embarrassed to share everything he finds online, because the person who the information should be shared with is just a half-acquainted co-worker.

Examples of suitable responses to the theme:

"My wife is always talking about something she would like to have and then the information sticks somewhere in the back of my head. Then sometimes I recall the conversations, when I run into something she was talking about."

"It gives you a good feeling when you can help someone, whether it's something new or not. I wish the friend will then someday return the favor. It's one of the most important things in a friendship. It reflects the fact that the person has been listening. And been present."

"It feels like you're giving a present to someone when you're sharing something. Someone has been looking for something, but hasn't found it, and then you can help him."

"I was able to plan a cheaper route for my co-worker's trip to South-America next fall."

"It gives me a nice and helpful feeling."

"This is my way of buying Christmas presents. I get reminded of the things people have said that they need."

After the respondents had had their time to answer, the researcher then clarified if the respondent agrees or disagrees with the statement, that the behavior is impulsive and unconscious. All of the respondents agreed with the statement.

Area of Inquiry 2: The Specific Information Acquiring Processes Associated with Information Acquiring-and-Sharing in Internet-Based Environments

In this area of inquiry, Rioux's objective was to collect data of the specific processes in which respondents acquire and share information in internet-based environments. This part of the research was included because acquiring information is a vital part of sharing information. In this study, the areas of inquiries are limited to the following categories:

- Type of acquisition
 - Find something that interests both you and someone else
 - Find something for yourself and something different for someone else
 - Don't find something for yourself, but do find something for someone else
- Encountering information
- Purposeful acquisition
- Non-purposeful acquisition
- Medium used to share

These issues were examined by asking the interviewees the following questions:

1) Describe the process that you go through when you share information that you think may be of use to someone you know.

2) While accessing various information sources in Internet, do you ever find a piece of information that you believe is

- BOTH useful to you AND is information that may be useful to someone you know?
- Do you share this information with other people in some way?
- If so, how do you usually share this information?

3) You find a piece of information that is useful to you AND during the same search, you find a DIFFERENT piece of information that you believe is of use to someone you know?

- Do you share this information with other people in some way?
- If so, how do you usually share this information?

4) You DO NOT find information that is useful to YOU, but you DO find information that you believe is useful to SOMEONE YOU KNOW.

- Do you share this information with other people in some way?
- If so, how do you usually share this information?

Clarifying questions from the interviewer were also necessary.

From the interview's collected data, following themes from Rioux's research emerged:

Theme 1: Most of the information shared in Internet-based environments is acquired in Internet-based environments.

Rioux's research shows that in 2004, when the research was published, parts of the shared information might have been from newspapers. Back then, it was normal to scan newspapers and forward it to others through e-mail. These kind of activities were not raised in this research's data. Respondents shared an unanimous view that all type of content that they share, is acquired from internet-based environments. The respondents had difficulties in describing specific places on the Internet where they find information that they share. This can be explained by the fact that there are numerous places where information can be found and shared. The interviewees listed places that they visit on a daily basis, such as Ilta Sanomat, BuzzFeed, Youtube etc., however "All over the internet." was the most common answer. In addition, "I share what I come across with." -type of answers were common.

Theme 2: Directed Information Acquisition in Internet-based environments

According to Rioux, directed acquisition processes "...are instances in which the respondent user logs onto the Internet, purposefully seeking to address a particular information need, and is successful in addressing that need." (Rioux, 2004, 86) Each interviewee told that they acquire information online on purpose. Although the Internet has gained much popularity due to the growth of social media, it still remains as the most important place to acquire information, whether it is data acquisition for a school project, work task or just the daily news.

"For me every morning starts by logging in to NHL.com to watch highlights of the NHL games played during the previous night, and if there is a particularly beautiful goal scored, I share it with my friends."

"The first thing that I do when I need an answer for something, I google it."

Theme 3: Semi-directed Information Acquisition in Internet-based environments

Rioux describes semi-directed information acquisition by the following; "although the user purposefully goes to the Internet resource, he/she does so with the intent to simply see if there is anything new or of interest there, which is a more passive, less directed way of acquiring information than what occurs during directed acquisition."

One example of this kind of behavior would be when a person goes online to find something to make themselves laugh.:

"There are a few sites that I occasionally visit when I need to cheer up."

The interviews also revealed, that information that is going to be shared online often finds the respondents and not the other way around. When people find information that they share, initially they don't think about who it might be of interest, but rather evaluate how interesting the content is and then share it to others.

"In practice, I just surf and read the news or just kill some time, and then I bump into something that I realize would interest someone I know."

This further confirms the existence of information encountering. Information encountering is considered as another semi-directed acquisition process, and "it refers to situations where people "accidentally bump into information" when they are not seeking any, or they may not be actively involved in looking for the information they happen to find" (Erdelez, 1999). Information encountering can be considered as an important way to acquire information because Rioux found out "that Information encountering accounts for up to half of the information acquired in Internet-based environments for some respondents." (Rioux, 2004, 86)

Theme 4: Undirected Information Acquisition in Internet-based environments

Information acquiring can also take place indirectly. "Indirect acquiring of information refers to instances in which information is obtained through means that require little or no purposeful seeking on the part of the user. " (Rioux, 2004, 88) The most used method of indirect information acquisition for respondents of this study is social media, especially via Facebook. Then second comes e-mail, which was still during Rioux's research the most common method for indirect information acquiring. The reason why people acquire information indirectly through Facebook, is that Facebook users can not control the information and content they are about to acquire when they log in. This is the main purpose of Facebook - users creating content for other users' consumption.

"I share content with my friends that I have received from my other friends in Facebook. It's like people have found content for me, so I only have to share it to my other friends."

"I get a lot of useful information through emailing lists of stores that I have signed up for."

Theme 5: Acquisition in Internet-based environments is mostly driven by personal needs and interests

When respondents were asked about the three different scenarios of information acquiring, it turned out that almost everyone had experienced all of the scenarios at least on some level. All of the respondents in this study, as well as in Rioux's, experienced most often the first of the three scenarios, where the respondent acquires information that is perceived to be of interest to both the respondent him/herself and someone else or others. The most rare scenario was the one, where the respondent doesn't acquire information that he considers to be useful, but does acquire information that he considers to be of interest to someone else.

Examples of the respondents' answers:

"Primarily I search the internet for things that interest myself. However, I share content that I believe interests also others than myself. "

"It's hard to imagine that I would search for something that doesn't interest myself, but interests someone I know. That might happen maybe once or twice a month."

"When it comes to sharing, you always have to think about the audience as well."

"I don't think that I would search for something that doesn't interest myself. Other than for my wife sometimes."

Area of Inquiry 3: Needs and Motivations that Prompt Information Sharing Processes Associated with Information Acquiring-and-Sharing in Internet-Based Environments

Rioux's objective of this area of inquiry was to collect data about respondents' needs and motivations that stimulate information sharing processes associated with information acquiring-and-sharing in Internet-based environments (IA&S). Based on the fact that this study's aim is to find out what are the needs and motivations behind

sharing information and other content online, this study's primary focus is on this area of inquiry.

To find out the needs and motivations, the respondents were asked the following questions;

- 1) Why do you share information?
- 2) What motivates you to share?

Clarifying questions were also used such as; can you tell me more about it and why do you do that? What kind of emotions does sharing make you feel?

The data that was collected for this study is categorized into the following themes from Rioux's study:

Theme 1: Organization-based motivators for information sharing behaviors

A very popular topic for discussion in Rioux's research was sharing in various organizational contexts, for example employment. This is also mentioned in this study, but on a much smaller scale. Many of the interviewees mentioned that their work requires information sharing through e-mails. In their personal life, the interviewees share information related to their work in LinkedIn. One of the interviewees, an entrepreneur by profession, stated that he shared a lot of work related information on Facebook. According to him, it is part of the company's marketing strategy - a cheap and easy way to advertise.

"The first thing that comes into my mind about sharing information is work."

"I perceive information sharing as work related, whereas content sharing is related to social media."

Theme 2: Sharing behaviors driven by social needs and motivations

It also became evident that the need for social interaction is another important motivator for sharing information and other content. This need becomes apparent in

the way people share information to a number of people. For example, many of the respondents belong to various different groups in Facebook. In other words, they are members of different groups, that are formed around a common hobby or interest and they can belong to a number of different groups. In these groups, users share information and other content to several people at the same time. Social media also allows users to share information to all those who are on the user's list of friends. In that case, there might be several hundreds of people who receive the shared information simultaneously.

The biggest dissimilarity to Rioux's research is the number of recipients. In his study "Collected data show that respondents typically share information with about a dozen people from their individual family, friendship, and workplace circles, i.e., groups of people and individuals with whom they have some kind of relationship." Another difference is certainly the level of relationship between the sender and the receivers. When sharing information in social media, the number of receivers can often be counted in hundreds. In these cases the level of relationship is understandably looser than during the time when Rioux conducted his research. Back then, sharing was made through e-mails, but even then the number of recipients for one particular e-mail was often not more than ten.

"When I post something on Facebook, I share it with everyone I know or I send a private message to one particular receiver."

"I openly share everything on Facebook to everyone, so I don't limit the recipients. The recipients of the same information may include my boss and my best friend. For that reason content has to be shared with good taste. "

"I have a tight circle to whom I share information. Mostly through Facebook. I belong to many different groups that only share information within the group. I rarely share anything through e-mail."

Theme 3: Sharing behaviors driven by emotional needs and motivations

As Rioux states in his research, social interaction is also driven by emotional needs and motivations. This is understandable, when information recipients include husband, wives, relatives, friends, etc. In other words, all relationships that have a certain level of emotional connectivity. Rioux also links emotional motivators for information sharing behavior to life roles. (Rioux, 2004, 99-100). As an example from this study, a respondent who described himself as a funny guy, mentioned that he shares a lot of humorous videos and jokes on Facebook to make other people laugh.

Illustrative quotations:

"We have a tight group of friends that I have grown up with."

"We share football tricks and goals etc. with each other. We are all kind of football maniacs."

"I mainly share with family and friends."

"Sharing is important for bonding with your close ones."

"The better I know the receiver, the more things I can share with him without thinking is this appropriate."

Theme 4: Sharing behaviors driven by relationship maintenance/participation needs and motivations

According to Rioux, "a key motivator for information sharing is that this behavior is perceived as a way to maintain these relationships." He continues that sharing information behavior of maintaining relationships produces positive emotions for the respondents. (Rioux, 2004, 100)

A few illustrative quotations to confirm these observations:

"I get pleasure out of social interaction and paying attention to others."

"The time we spend together is limited, so we keep in touch by sharing information."

"It's the way we keep in touch nowadays, to some extent it has replaced phone calls."

"Social interaction has reduced during the rise of social media, which has in turn increased the role of sharing."

"Sharing is part of friendships and maintaining them."

"Nowadays it's easier to share content than to pick up the phone and meet face to face."

"Sharing gives us the opportunity to recall some of the great moments we have shared together."

"For me, sharing is a sign that the other person still cares, although we haven't seen each other in ages."

The respondents of this survey reported that they keep in touch with their family, friends, co-workers and classmates by sharing information and content with them. The results of this study also revealed how social media plays an increasingly larger role as a mean of communication. The hectic lifestyle people are currently living keeps them busy and leaves less time for chatting on the phone. Thus, communication with close and/or distant friends and family is often managed through sharing content in social media. The respondents also believed that improved targeting has increased sharing.

Area of Inquiry 4: The Specific Information Sharing Processes Associated with Sharing in Social media

Rioux's objective for his own area of inquiry was to collect data about the specific information sharing processes that respondents use when they engage in information acquiring-and-sharing (IA&S) behaviors in Internet-based environments. The purpose of this study was to research how social media affects people's sharing. Unlike in the

other areas of inquiries, the research questions had to be modified to suit the needs of this study. It is only natural, that Rioux's research questions would not suit the needs of this study as they were, since the objective is to investigate the specific sharing processes associated with sharing in social media. The following questions were compiled using Rioux's questions about specific information sharing processes associated with internet-based-environments as a starting point. Similarly, the themes that arose from the findings are based on Rioux's themes, and they were modified to suit the purpose of this research based on the collected data.

For this area of inquiry, the data was collected by following Rioux's methods in a semi-directed interview by asking the following questions. These questions are based Rioux's questions, which he used in examining how internet-based environments affect sharing behavior.

Describe the process that you go through when you share information that you think may be of use to someone you know.

- Did you find-and-share before you started using social media? In what ways?
- Has social media changed your content sharing behavior? If yes, please describe how.
- Why do you share information and other content in social media, rather than by other means?

Data received from the interviewees form the following themes that Rioux raised in his research. These themes have been altered to create more relevance in regards to social media. They are still closely connected to Rioux's research.

Theme 1: Information sharing behaviors have increased with the adoption of social media applications.

All 12 respondents said social media has increased their sharing behavior. Information shared through social media has a larger number of recipients. Social media has gained much popularity because of its convenience. Many articles are included with a share-button, which most of the respondents find very convenient to

use. One of the respondents also mentioned to have used sharing tools that preceded social media, but did not create a habit for it, because they were clumsy to use.

Theme 2: Facebook is the preferred method of sharing information acquired from Internet- based environments.

The interviewees' responses revealed that e-mail is still a very popular tool for sharing. However, the data gathered for this study reveals that social media has risen past it. Almost all of the respondents stated that they shared information through email before the emergence of social media. The respondents believed that e-mails continue being a preferred tool in work-related sharing, but in terms of quantity, the most content is shared through social media.

Illustrative comments:

"Social media has increased my sharing because it's so easy. Especially videos from Youtube."

"Sharing a link is so much easier than calling. The threshold to contact people is lower than in calling."

"Sharing has increased because it's so easy and efficient. You can contact a lot of people through Facebook at the same time."

"Targeting in Facebook is so easy. People can decide for themselves if they're interested enough to read it."

In addition, two respondents told that the one reason why they share information on social media is that there is a chance to win money and other prizes. A quote from a respondent:

"I share content of a store in Lapland, because they have a cash prize draw among the people who have shared the post."

In addition, the respondents were asked the following questions that are not related to Rioux's research. These questions have been generated only for the purposes of this study. The questions are based on this study's theoretical part of social media. The purpose of these questions is to find out special features that can be associated with sharing in social media.

- Are you more likely to share content that interests you and other users or content that most likely interests only other users?
- Do you most often share content through social media to one person at the time, to a few or a bigger group? (Do you limit your sharing in any way? For example, you only share to your inner circle?)
- How often do you share content? Have you limited the frequency in any way?
- What kinds of things have a positive effect on your content sharing behavior? What affects negatively? (What factors affect your sharing? For example, the contents of news, relevancy, source?)

The data of this study shows that the respondents have a lot of thought in what the receivers think about the information before they share it. The respondents share content that interests other users as well as the sharer itself and content that primarily interests only others. Most often they share information that interests both sides.

Illustrative comments:

"Of course you think about the audience. I don't see any point in sharing content if I don't believe it interests at least some of the recipients."

“I believe there are a lot of things that people should know. When I share information I don't think if it interests them or not. I guess it's some form of informing.”

“I like to believe that I can have an affect on the recipient's opinions, such as politics, by sharing. Things that matter to me.”

“If the content that is going to be shared is considered quality, it doesn't matter when it is uploaded in internet in the first place”

The respondents are careful about sharing too much information, because they believe it might annoy other users. A general consensus among the respondents was that sharing more than once in Facebook during one day is too much. Concerns over privacy were the main reasons that hold respondents from sharing more in Facebook. The respondents also mentioned that they like to depict a certain type of picture of themselves in social media. Many also mentioned that they are not sure how many people outside their friend list will see the shared content. In relation to this, many of the respondents also said, that there is a need to improve awareness of personal privacy as well as a need to improve the target audience of shared content. The respondents' target audience in Facebook varied greatly. Others shared content to everybody, while others chose to limit their audience. Often the number of recipients depends on the content that is about to be shared.

The majority of respondents prefer to share positive content and many revealed that they purposefully avoid sharing negative content. When sharing something serious in nature, the source has more significance than when sharing e.g. cat videos. Some relevance is placed on the freshness of the information. The freshness of the content was said to have some relevance, but not much.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarizes the findings of this study. First the main research question will be answered. The main aim of this study was to examine the motivations behind sharing information in social media. Next theoretical contributions of this study will be examined and then the practical managerial contributions. The last section deals with limitations and possible further research areas. Before that the next paragraph summarizes the overall of this study.

The goal of this study was to find out why people share information and other content in social media. This was done by studying the motivations that drive sharing information behavior. Because Rioux has published his exploratory study, where he built grounded theory of Information acquiring-and-sharing in Internet-based environments, it was decided that by testing Rioux's research deductively in a different operational environment is the best way to reach this study's objectives. In his framework Rioux presents a theory that identifies, describes and explains information acquiring and sharing in internet-based environments.. Rioux collected data for his study from graduate library and information science students. As it is said in his study, the framework is now in place to be tested among other groups. The aim of this study was to provide deeper insights to Rioux's findings by systemically examining his framework of IA&S behaviors among Finnish social media users.

7.1 Theoretical contributions

What are the motivations behind sharing information in social media?

This study confirms Rioux's findings that everyday information needs motivate information behavior. These can be either object-based or based in affection, e.g. curiosity. There is a mix of personal or internal needs and motives and external or

environmental needs and motives that drive information sharing behavior. These factors often interact with each other in complex ways.

Social, emotional, relationship maintenance and participation needs and motives can be considered to be important internal factors of sharing information and other content on social media. For some, information sharing is a way to determine self, and for others it's a mean to help others. Some even feel it offers an opportunity to influence others. According to the respondents, the most common motive for sharing in social media is relationship maintenance. Similar results were also received by Dholakia et. al., 2004, while researching the needs and motivations of people joining social networks. These motives are, for example, giving and receiving emotional support, meeting like-minded people, socializing, networking and sharing common interests. (Dholakia et. al., 2004). According to Pentina et. al. (2008) different kinds of needs, such as functional, social, psychological and hedonistic needs influence activities in online communities.

Organizational-based, expectations of others, environmental norms, and opportunities to win money can be considered as external needs and motivations to share information on social media. The study shows that social media motivates its users to define themselves by creating an online identity. This social media identity may often be such as we would like to see ourselves or how we would like others to perceive us. These results are consistent with what Ruohotie writes about external motivation. External motivations are often derived from work environment, but it also takes place when a person is motivated by external factors, such as recognition, money or glory. (Ruohotie 1998, 37-41) On the other hand, reciprocity in social media can also be encouraged with rewarding. (Preece & Maloney-Krichmar 2003, 21.) The study also confirms Rioux's findings that the concept of user's life role plays a strong role between the social, emotional, environmental and relationship motivations and needs. Individuals have several different roles and all these roles have their own set of needs and motivations.

Based on the data of this study, it could be argued that social media strengthens the user's motivation to share information particularly in social media, because it gives a platform to satisfy natural human needs of social, emotional, relationship

maintenance and participation needs. The motivation to share information on social networks is also supported by today's busy lifestyles and the fact that social life has moved to social media. In other words, a large proportion of people with whom the user has a need to be with are easily found from social media sites such as Facebook.

What processes are associated with information acquiring-and-sharing online?

Processes of IA&S behavior in online environments have the same characteristics that IA&S behavior had in internet-based environments before the emergence of social media. Information acquisition includes different kinds of processes. It means that information can be acquired actively, directly and purposefully as well as encountering information. Encountering information means that information can be acquired passively, non-directly and accidentally. In other words, the user has “bumped into” the information he or she is going to share in social media while searching for information for something completely different purpose.

This study confirms Rioux's observations in terms of the creation of potential memory through conversational exchanges about everyday needs and interests. These information needs of others have an affect on the user's information acquiring process. According to the data received by this study, people mentally store bits and pieces of conversations with other people. When they accidentally or knowingly find information online, they automatically and unconsciously recall these information needs of others from those conversations and share the information with that person or persons.

Information acquisition is mostly driven by user's own personal needs and motivations. Occasionally, information acquisition can also be driven by other people's needs, but mostly information for others has been acquired by encountering information by accident. The data collected for this research shows that information that is shared online, either by e-mail or in social media, has been acquired from internet-based environments. When comparing data collected by this study to Rioux's

research, in regards to the time people spend for information acquisition processes, it becomes clear that it has increased considerably during the past 11 years.

How social media has changed information sharing in Internet environments?

According to this study, social media has multiplied people's information and content sharing online. E-mails keep playing a big role in information sharing, but as this study shows, information is more often shared through social media. On a practical level, social media applications have made sharing much easier. Sharing through e-mails has been relatively easy in the past, but during the era of social media, when every article includes a share-button, users are just a click away from sharing it on social media.

It can be said, that social media is almost the synonym for information and content sharing, because no social media site would survive if their users stopped sharing. The data collected for this study reveals a concern over personal privacy when it comes to sharing in Facebook. It is the main reason for users to limit content sharing. This study also confirms Bernstein et. Al. 2010 findings that sharing is also held back by concerns about spamming and misreading friends' interests.

Although, the main reasons behind sharing information in social media are the needs for social interaction and motivations to maintain relationships, it seems that at the same time there is social pressure to build and maintain "the social media self-image" that goes along with the expectations of the society. This finding is consistent with Nardi (2005) observation that social media is also used to manage self-images and to produce a desired self by selectively circulating information (Nardi 2005)

In other words, when a user would like to share more and different type of content, it could go against the image he/she is trying to maintain. Therefore, users have to fight against the needs that drive to share content in the first place. It seems like many social media users have difficulties in presenting their true self, because in social media people are connected to so many other people that it creates expectations for a certain kind of behavior. These observations are shared with Das & Kramer (2013)

and Sleeper et al. (2013) who argue that users protect their privacy by adhering to social norms and strategic self-sensorship.

The ease of sharing has also created a phenomenon, where users share information, an article for example, that they haven't read themselves. The information suits the image that they want to present of themselves on social media without bothering to read what they share beyond the headline. This finding is consistent with the findings of a website called The Verge, which claims that there are two types of sharers: "There are those who share without finishing the article. And there are those who share because they have really read and consumed the entire article." (The Verge.com, 2014)

To summarize the theoretical contribution of this study, it can be said that the findings of this study increase the reliability of Rioux's research. This study has proven in practice, that Rioux's research results are in fact repeatable. The results confirm that information acquiring-and-sharing itself is considered to be "a common, identifiable, pleasant information behavior that supports the everyday interactions and information exchanges that drive human relationships via an interplay of information needs, affect, cognition, and communication variables", just like Rioux identifies this phenomena in his own study. (Rioux, 2004, 133)

7.2 Managerial contributions

Why it is important for marketers to understand motivations behind information sharing in social media?

A large part of people's everyday life has moved online and a big part of social interaction takes place in different kinds of social media environments. As this research revealed in its theoretical part with the help of the Moa-model, nowadays when opportunity and ability are pretty much given, the only way to influence people's behavior online is through motivation. In order to achieve desired behavior,

it is important to understand what drives people towards certain behavior and what are the motivations behind it.

At the moment, indicators for good web content in social media include likes, recommendations and shares. However, staring at the number of likes and recommendations is not enough to measure consumer engagement. The indicators mentioned above are popular, because they offer concrete results and their growth is always a positive sign for a company. Nonetheless, these indicators offer no in-depth information. For this reason, it is recommended for companies to get to know their active consumers and their motivations behind consumption. For example, a company can try to find out what are the interests and views of their target group, in what forms consumers consume their product and in which channels they are active. Once these factors become known, consumers can be offered relevant content served in a format that ensures the content is interesting enough for the consumers to read it.

From a company's perspective, the mere sharing of content doesn't necessarily reflect on behavior or opinions,, in which case sharing doesn't automatically produce expected positive results. Thus, instead of sharing content, it is more relevant to focus on the delivery of the message - what kind of impact has it had on the reader. Therefore, content design and production should not be based solely on website click statistics. The purpose of content is not to collect the biggest number of likes and shares, but rather make some sort of impact on its reader. This is also supported by the fact that the respondents of this study stated that they will most probably share information that they believe is important or information that has influenced them greatly. For example, one of the respondents said that he sharers "*Things that matter to me.*"

This is also supported by Berger and Milkman's findings that state that virality is partially driven by physiological arousal. Content that evokes high-arousal positive (awe) or negative (anger or anxiety) emotions is more viral. Content that evokes low-arousal, or deactivating, emotions (e.g. sadness) is less viral. (Berger & Milkman, 2011)

Measuring genuine consumer engagement is widely discussed, but there are no quick and easy solutions for it. As stated with statistics in the beginning of this study,

when the aim is to look at changes in consumer perceptions and behavior, a much larger investment is required than just monitoring click meters. By studying the time spent on content, companies are able to keep track of what kind of content customers want to read and consume. Good indicators are for example, completing an article to the end, watching a video until the end and commenting on these.

The ultimate goal is to create an emotional bond with users, which guides the consumer's decision making. When a company shares content that is relevant for the user on social media, the reader is reassured that the company has something meaningful to offer and thus becomes the company's customer at some point.

7.3 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

Although this study was able to achieve its objectives, it does have limitations. First of all, the study had to be completed in a given time frame resulting in limited number of respondents. Another thing that had an affect on the size of the collected data is monetary resources. With sufficient funds, it would have been possible to reward the respondents in some way, thus resulting in a larger amount of respondents. In addition, this would have provided a possibility for travel around Finland to achieve a more diverse group of respondents. Taking into account the narrow sample of this study, the outcome might be different if it was conducted in a more diverse culture than the Finnish culture.

In addition to the narrow sample, setting the age group to 25-34 year olds limits the generalizability of the results to the Finnish population. Also, the researcher's inexperience in conducting research may have an impact on the results. Especially experience in conducting interviews serves a purpose. It is also important to understand, that in qualitative research the researcher and the object of research interact with each other making complete objectivity impossible to reach as the researcher is involved in creating the subject (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2004, 23). Thus, the data does not reflect reality as it is, but reality is shown through the researcher's perspective (Aaltola & Valli 2010, 73).

To date, there are not many academic publications to be found on what drives people to share content with others and what type of content is most likely to be shared (J.Berger & K. L. Milkman, 2011). Rioux pointed out the same fact already in 2004. The researcher hopes there will be a change during the following years.

Rioux's framework for IA&S behaviors has proved to be a useful tool to study information behaviors online. The researcher of this study highly recommends it to be tested in other study groups or between two different cultures. It could also be interesting to study A&S behaviors from the perspective of the receiver as well as put the focus on the relationship between the sender and receiver. Another interesting topic for future research could be to focus on "status building", in another words building digital self images, that has emerged with the rise of social media. How people build their online status, what kind of content they share and what kind of content they avoid sharing in order to present themselves in a certain way.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1. HAASTATTELULOMAKE

Kysely käsittelee motivaatioita ja tarpeita, jotka vaikuttavat sisällön jakamiseen internetissä ja mikä rooli sosiaalisella medially on sisällön jakamiseen internetissä. Sisällön jakamisella tässä tutkimuksessa tarkoitetaan esimerkiksi artikkelin/ kuvan / videon / tekstin jakamista. Tässä tutkimuksessa ei käsitellä sosiaalisen median ominaispiirrettä eli tykkäämistä jakamisena eikä myöskään tavallista kommentointia/keskustelua). Lisäksi omien tilapäivitykset ja omien kuvien jakaminen Facebookissa rajataan jakamisen ulkopuolelle.

Haastattelu tullaan nauhoittamaan, jotta vastaukset saadaan kokonaisuudessaan talteen. Tietojen käsittely on luottamuksellista eikä niitä luovuteta tämän tutkimuksen ulkopuolisille tahoille.

TAUSTATIEDOT

Sukupuoli: **nainen / mies**

Ikä:

Listaa koime tärkeintä asiaa, jotka kuvaavat parhaiten itseäsi

Esimerkiksi työtittelin, harrastukset, vapaaehtoistyöt, parisuhteet jne.. Sinulla voi olla monta eri roolia, mutta valitse ne, jotka koet tärkeimmiksi.

Esimerkkejä

1. Myyntikonsultti/asiakaspalvelija/
2. Opiskelija/valmistunut
3. Äiti/isä/isosisko
4. Ystävä/reissaaja
5. Jalkapallon pelaaja/urheilija

- Kuinka usein käytät internetiä viikossa?
- Kuinka paljon tästä ajasta vietät sosiaalisessa mediassa?
- Mihin sosiaalisen median kanaviin olet rekisteröitynyt? Missä kanavissa liikut?

Minkälaista käyttäytymistä informaation etsintään ja jakamiseen verkossa liittyy?

- Voisitko yrittää kuvailla mitä mielessäsi tapahtuu kun löydät verkosta jotain josta ajattelet olevan hyötyä jollekin muulle kuin itsellesi? Voisitko kertoa jonkun esimerkin sisällöstä jota löytänyt jollekin?
- Mitä ajatuksia/tunteita liittäisit siihen, kun löydät jotain internetistä mikä voisi olla hyödyllistä jollekin/joillekin ketä tunnet? (apukysymyksiä: Onko vaikea pukea sanoiksi sitä mitä mielessäsi liikkuu?) (voisiko sanoa että se on aika impulsiivista ja tiedostamatonta toimintaa?)
- Voisitko seuraavaksi kuvailla hieman sitä prosessia, miten päädyt jakamaan sisältöä jonka ajattelet olevan hyödyllistä jollekin kenet tunnet? (apukysymyksiä: Miten löydät sisältöä, jota päädyt jakamaan?, Mistä löydät jaettavaa sisältöä, miten jaat löytämäsi sisällön eteenpäin?)

Seuraavaksi tarkastellaan kolmea erilaista tilannetta:

Surffatessasi internetissä, löydätkö tietoa/sisältöä, jonka ajattelet kiinnostavan sinun lisäksi myös jotakuta muuta sinun itsesi lisäksi? ->Jaatko löytämäsi tiedon näiden henkilöiden kanssa? Jos jaat niin miten jaat sen?

2. Oletko ollut tilanteessa, jossa etsit (missä tahansa) internetistä tietoa/sisältöä jostain itsellesi tärkeästä asiasta ja löydätkin tarvitsemasi tiedon/sisällön, etsinnän aikana löydät kuitenkin tämän lisäksi jotain muuta tietoa/sisältöä mikä voisi kiinnostaa jotain ketä tunnet?

->Jaatko löytämäsi ”toisen” tiedon/sisällön? Jos jaat niin miten jaat sen?

3. Oletko ollut tilanteessa jossa etsit tietoa/sisältöä (missä tahansa) internetissä löytämättä kuitenkaan mitään itsellesi, mutta samalla kuitenkin löydät jotain jonka ajattelet voivan olla hyödyllistä jollekin kenet tunnet. Jaatko löytämäsi tiedon/sisällön eteenpäin? Jos jaat niin miten jaat sen?

- Minkälaista tietoa/sisältöä jaat useimmiten muille sosiaalisessa mediassa?
Lisäkysymykset: Minkä tyyppistä/ aihealueen sisältöä jaat useimmiten? (Esim. Henkilökohtaista?, Huumori? Ajankohtaisia uutisia? Kerro muutama konkreettinen esimerkki jakamastasi sisällöstä?)
- Kenelle usein miten jaat tietoa/sisältöä? Miksi juuri heille?
- Onko jotain sisältöä, jota et jaa/tai vältät jakamasta sosiaalisessa mediassa? jos vastasit kyllä, niin antaisitko muutaman esimerkin tällaisesta sisällöstä. (esim. Tiettyjä aihealueita)

Mitkä ovat motivaatiot ja tarpeet jotka vaikuttavat tiedon etsimiseen ja jakamiseen verkossa?

- Miksi jaat tietoa/sisältöä muille?
- Mitkä asiat motivoivat sinua jakamaan? (apukysymys: Mitä ajatuksia/tunteita itse sisällön jakaminen sinussa herättää?)

Jakaminen sosiaalisessa mediassa

- Onko sosiaalinen media muuttanut käyttäytymistäsi sisällön jakamisen suhteen ja jos on niin miten?
- Ennen sosiaalista mediaa, jaoitko internetistä tai muualta löytämäsi sisältöä? Jos jaoit niin millä tavalla?
- Miksi jaat sisältöä mieluiten sosiaalisessa mediassa?
- Jaatko todennäköisemmin sisältöä jonka uskot kiinnostavan Molempia eli sinua itseäsi ja muita VAI jaatko todennäköisemmin sisältöä joka kiinnostaa muita?
- Sosiaalisen median kautta jaatko sisältöä useimmin yhdelle henkilölle kerrallaan, muutamalle vai isommalle joukolle? (Rajaatko jakamisen ennemmin lähipiiriisi?)
- Kuinka usein jaat sisältöä/tietoa? Onko sinulla jotain rajoitusta kuinka usein jaat?
- Mitkä asiat vaikuttavat positiivisesti sisällön jakamiseesi? Entä negatiivisesti? Ts. Mitkä tekijät vaikuttavat jakamiseesi? Uutisen sisältö, ajankohtaisuus, sisällön tuottaja/tekijä eli tiedon lähde?

Kiitokset vastauksistasi!