

Concept

1. Introduction

The last couple of weeks we worked on our concepts for the Pifworld campaign. After our research report we had to come up with a couple of concepts that would trigger students in becoming active. Finally after doing some brainstorm sessions and exchanging the ideas that we had in mind, three concepts became clear to us. In this document we will outline our three concepts and tell you about the way we want to use them for our viral campaign.

The first concept is Hellomynameise, they make business cards obsolete. The device called 'the e-connector' let's you share and connect through all the social networks available. And last week April 16th, Hellomynameise presented its demo at TheNextWeb Conference '09 – both the audience and the jury found that they were the best of 24 start-ups competing. Within a month, they expect at least 1000 connectors to be shipped.

The second concept is more web-based. With using a 'url-shortner', ambassadors can show there friends and contacts that they are supporting projects on Pifworld. The 'new' url has, in addition to the regular website visited, a bar with information on the project that they are supporting. It's free, personal and an original idea for exposure for both Pifworld and the projects involved.

The third concept will be more like a kind of case-study in which we apprehend the role of an ambassador in a Pifworld project. With the help of the other MediaLAB students, we will support Media Training For Youth project in Mitchell's Plain, South Africa. Together with the help of the other students, we hope we can collect the information that is needed for the project.

Finally, we will tell something about an applied research report, concerning the global blogosphere and international social network landscape. In this chapter we will outline the content based and the appliance base part of the research.

The three ideas and the applied research report will be our deliverables in the next phase; the realization phase.

2. MyNameIsE

2.1.1 The Idea; Postmachina's 'Hello, My Name is E'

Our first concept involves the E-Connector by the Dutch start-up 'Hello, my name is E' based in Amsterdam. The service provides a new way that makes business cards obsolete. With the help of a small device, you can exchange your personal info and get connected to each others social networks. The idea is originated during our brainstorm sessions. As most of the things are getting digital, we thought the opposite. We wanted to have something physical; something that we could hold in our hands, something like a Poken.

Their website explains it as this:

'E is a service that integrates all your existing social services into an E

- ID, which you can share with anyone in the real world. To exchange EID's, you just need an internet-enabled mobile phone like an iPhone or Blackberry. When you exchange your EID's, E makes sure your contacts get added to your other social services like Netlog, Twitter, Last.fm, Ssocial, automatically.'

The device has not launched yet, but the first 1.000 connectors are expected to be shipped next month.

2.1.2 The 'viral' part

With consumers showing increasing resistance to traditional forms of advertising such as TV or newspaper ads, marketers have turned to alternate strategies, including viral marketing. Viral marketing exploits existing social networks by encouraging customers to share product information with their friends. Previously, a few in-depth studies have shown that social networks affect the adoption of individual innovations and products, according to J. Adamic and L. A. Huberman in his writing 'The dynamics of viral marketing'.

The argument is applicable to the E-Connector as well. Because, besides the connector, you can 'tag' physical objects with a chip to connect with your profiles. For example, there can be posters with different projects that you might be interested in. You touch the poster and you can participate in Pifworld on the project you loved most. These posters can be put where we want can reach our target audiences. There are several places you can think of, for example charity events, universities, schools and other public where people meet, share thoughts and from now on – connect to Pifworld.

With having your personal information and your social networks with you, users will be able to 'share' or 'push' their new social networks through friends who have a connector.

Marketing guru Seth Godin states: 'Being viral isn't the hard part. The hard part is making that viral element actually produce something of value, not just entertainment for the client or your boss'. Hello My Name Is E just does that, add value for users through a fast spreading campaign.

The viral effect can be used in different ways, resulting and ultimately, resulting in new members for Pifworld.

Connecting social networks

Pifworld is a new social network, one of the biggest problems for a new social network is to get people to make a new account at, yet another, social network. Since Pifworld does add something unique in addition to 'just another social network account', triggering people to invite their friends to Pifworld is an important element in Pifworld's strategy to find new members and people who donate money.

The E-Connector does connect people to (new) social networks, using the small device members can invite friends, relatives and other people who are interested in joining Pifworld. The device can also be 'branded' with the Pifworld logo on it. Holding two E-Connectors to each other, waiting for a blinking light and plugging it into your computer leads to being connected.

Hello my name is E brings two important goals together – one is the 'spreading' of Pifworld to friends and other people who might be interested. The other good thing mentioning is that people will actually become a member of the Pifworld community, which is something Pifworld's strives for. You can use LinkedIn for your business contacts, Hyves for your friends, LastFM to share music to friends and Pifworld to contribute and collaborate on projects you and your friends want to be involved with.

2.1.2 Tools

White-labeling

If the E-Connector becomes a gadget, it makes sense to add value for Pifworld using a kind of white-labeling. The costs of the device are currently estimated

on 5-6 euro each. Selling the E-Connector for a little more than 10 euro would leave 5 euro, or one Pifworld credit, to a project of your choice. This, being a good deal for both parties, could be a way to connect people, invite other people and support projects on Pifworld.

Events

The E-Connector is a perfect tool for conferences, summits and other places where people meet. You don't need a stand, but just a poster with an RFID tag in it. Connect with people throughout the event, and keep them up-to-date with the status of the project they want to get involved with. People are using the E-Connector to share personal information and the business card becomes obsolete. Pifworld can connect projects with the interests of the people who are attending the events. With help of the e-connector, Pifworld can target user groups in a unique and original way...

3. URL-shortner

The idea of this URL-shortners is originated from a blogpost about 'ReplyToAll' at the Springwise blog, the post was about an email signature that showed the good cause the sender is supporting. We like the exposure and the ability for ambassadors to show their recipients of what they support.

However, just copying this new idea would not be challenging at all for us.

Emails don't usually work as virals, unless they're chain letters. But we do not think the Pifworld communication plans allows us to set up chain letter...

Neither would we like that. The signature does no work viral either... After some brainstorm, we came up with 'mash-up' of both concepts – and it works as a viral. Twitter shows that links can have an amazing spread very fast.

When the 'right' people tweet an url, the reach is huge... We mashed up our ideas with linking via URL-shortners and came up with a concept.

3.1 The Concept

The idea of the url-shortner is a kind of widget-like-tool. We build a site that does the same thing as, for example Tinyurl.com – we shorten long url's to smaller ones. But something special happens when we the link gets shortened, an extra bar appears on the website that is linked... This looks like this:

This bar will show some key information about the project, the name of the player or ambassador and maybe a status showing the progress of the fundraised project. The reader can click away this bar or click on it and go directly to the project at Pifworld.com. When using this little pop-up bar, anyone who is clicking on the link will have personal information about the

supporting project. This will not only improve the image of the person but it is also a great branding for Pifworld. The bar could look like this:

3.2 The 'viral' part

Links can become very viral on a platform such as Twitter, whenever someone 'RT's' ('forwarding' the message to his/her followers) the reach of the link can grow very, very fast. Mumbai, the recent Schiphol plane accident and a lot of tech news shows that the speed and the spread of a single link is not to be underestimated. Building upon the popular micro-blogging platform Twitter, we think our url-shortner can be a great asset for popular social networks such as Twitter.

3.3 Tools

For this concept, there are some open-frameworks that can be used to make a url-shortner. These are free of charges and can be used by anyone. After talking to a company specialized in building widgets (open-social.nl), we are told that the website can be build fairly easily. The website would need an API, which means that third-parties can use the service as well. We've come up with the following services that could benefit ambassadors to spread the word about the projects they are supporting:

Wordpress: This populair blogging tool makes it easy for third parties to make their own widgets and plug-ins that can be integrated into the blog. We'd like to see a plugin-in that uses our url-shortner API to transform all the 'outgoing' links to our links (that have an extra bar with the project status of the ambassador).

Twitter: The fastest growing social network (by far), is known for it's powerful way to share information unlike never before. Traditional media such as CNN and the BBC use the service as a tool for breaking news for no other reason than being on top of everything that is happening. When we can add a bar to the links that get shared, it will not only give exposure to the project, but Pifworld will also gain respect as the link gets clicked...

3.4 Additional technical specifications

In addition to the functionalities described earlier; the url-shortner should be able to generate short url's through an API, bookmarklets and a form on the website. The following stats are available to Pifworld:

- the amount of clicks;
- where the clicks are coming from (geographically);
- where the clicks are coming from (referrers);

-conversations about the links (twittersearch, friendfeed etc.); With these features, users can generate links and directly post them on Twitter and Facebook with an additional message. Pifworld could also be a platform for this when it supports the open-social platform. With this url-shortner, users will also be able to see the amount of clicks of the url they shared, the service could make a graph of this.

The API and the database will be the most time consuming to develop, according to the gentlemen from open-social.nl.

4. Case-study: 'Being a Pifworld project ambassador'

Throughout our struggle in finding good ideas for a viral, we thought of changing our position from outside the social network, Pifworld, to within it. So, why not become an ambassador of a project on Pifworld.com and start fundraising. This concept benefits in having a clearer goal for our target group, but also for ourselves. We aren't looking at Pifworld from a common point of view, but become part of the network and want to know what triggers people to donate money if we ask them. By researching the progress of the project and asking questions to the students about why they did or did not donate to the project, we can gain information that is valuable for us and for Pifworld.

4.1 The idea

We selected a project on Pifworld.com called 'Media training 4 youth' in South-Africa. The Godmother Foundation wants to establish a Youth Media Development Centre where the local community can have long term training programs in the field of film making, television and web design. It will also be an information centre where the community can do research and establish connections. We have chosen this project, because of the resemblance with the medialab, so the students can identify themselves with the local community. Basically the project wants to create their own medialab in which students can submit to a training program. The idea is to start the fund raise of this project, beginning with the medialab students. We asked the students of the MediaLAB to make a profile on Pifworld and become friends with our own profile, called 'medialab2009'. By involving the MediaLAB students in our project we can create a positive image for the medialab itself and at the same time helping Pifworld in fundraising a project and getting new players. By spreading information about the project in South-Africa, the whole idea of

making a viral gets more tangible. We have a clear goal in mind; fundraise a project, and its challenging the students to become more active.

4.2 The first phase

This phase has already been started last week. We sent out an email in which we invited the MediaLAB students to sign up at pifworld.com and become friends with 'medialab2009'. This profile is ambassador of the 'Media training 4 youth' project described above.

4.3 The second phase

The second phase begins when everybody from the MediaLAB signed up. Then we can send out a fundraising request to the students and be sure that the donated money is visible on the site as fundraised by the medialab2009 profile. During this process we can see who is going to be the first one in donating money and can ask why. Is it because of our request or for the interesting project and also if they are going to follow the project once they have donated?

4.4 The third phase

The third phase is about spreading our ambassadorship to the audience outside the medialab. This phase can only be done if the students from inside the medialab are participating in our project. The diffusion and which tools we are going to use for this aren't certain. Maybe it can be done by integrating one of the concepts above into this concept and see how it works out. This phase can then start when the other concepts are working. Another thing that can be done in this phase is making a medialab video to put on our ambassador page. Show the pifworld community how the medialab is fundraising money for the 'Media training 4 youth' program.

4.5 The tools

The tools that can be used for promoting the project are:

- Integrating the project widget from Pifworld on the social networks
- Sending messages to the Pifworld community and make use of the grabber tool
- Use our own ambassador page on pifworld.com
- Use our blog from the MediaLAB
- Combining this concept with one of the concepts above?

5. Mapping the international blogosphere and social networks

The last deliverable for Pifworld is an applied research report. Pifworld has just launched his new worldwide platform for good causes. It is a platform for a sustainable relation between donors, the projects they support and the field workers and organizations that are involved. The Internet offers great opportunities in interactivity. Social networks and weblogs in particular, enable people to stay in contact, share experiences, and even organize their social lives. Therefore we found it very important to map out these two topics in a global context. In consultation with Pifworld we will write an applied research report about the international blogosphere and the global social network landscape. In the meantime Pifworld is making his introduction into the Dutch blogosphere and social networks. Their final aim is to go global and the applied research report will assist them. The applied research is about mapping these two worlds in order to assist Pifworld to grow globally. In the report we will outline two topics; the international blogosphere and social networks with international users. These two topics will be separately discussed in a content-based format and an applied format.

5.1 Content-based format

Within the content-based format we will map out both spheres internationally. We make a list of top 5 international weblogs and social networks which are relevant for Pifworld. We will give information about those weblogs and social networks.

5.2 Applied format

Based on the research we did in the previous paragraph. The applied part of the report will be more practically based. We give suggestions and information how to approach weblogs and social networks.