What forms the relationship of trust between anonymous individuals or groups that enables influence and persuasion online?

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Introduction

This study investigates what factors build trust for users online. What makes us trust others to allow ourselves to be influenced/persuaded in the online environment? How is it that we can be influenced or persuaded to act, respond or behave in a certain way in the real world but differently in the digital world?

Signs and signifiers formed in society condition us to follow instruction. An example of which is the highway code, dictating how one should behave when approaching various signs and symbols. This system has been in place for years and is fixed by law. We are influenced and persuaded immediately by it and trust others to behave similarly. Online, however, is somewhat new and faces challenges particular to those new to the environment. When confronted with instructions including inputting personal details or clicking to proceed, processing such instruction can take time and can seem unnerving as their information goes into 'cyberspace'. This is where influence, persuasion and building of trust is key for the role of the designer. In contrast the online environment can provide users with the confidence they otherwise may not have with people in the real world, which can allow for a honest approach and assist in the process of establishing trust in the content they are provided with.

Trust online predominantly relies on the use of visual images and language strategies, which have been investigated in previous studies included in appendix 1. It is the mechanisms that are used to build trust that have been further investigated in these recent work.

Methodology

Stage One

Stage one investigates semiotics in the form of icons, symbols and pictograms of trust in society, that can be brought into online systems to instill trust for the user. Such examples include representations of gestures, body language, repetition, humour, and reputation. In this study new and adapted existing symbols have been developed and placed into context both online and in society, to facilitate reactions from the users who interact with them.

Stage Two

Stage two begins to apply the trust tools established at stage one to demonstrate the clear indicators needed to build trust for the online user. For trust to grow there needs to be mechanisms and cues built into the system being designed from the offset, for instance, visual elements and language tools. By doing this it can be better understood at what point trust becomes most prominent if at all, and what those key drivers are.

Many studies, including that of Sillence et al (2006,) debate that the first impression individuals receive online is from the look and feel of a site, before conducting a more in depth analysis of the information presented. "A critical part of the first stage of assessing trustworthiness relies on the design of the website" (Sillence et al 2006). Following that we begin to engage, share and influence individuals and groups online using the mechanisms provided. However for trust to take place there needs to be the willingness to be vulnerable.

As discussed by Barak (2008) on the work of Mayer et al (1995) "...without any risk or vulnerability, there is no need for trust."

Stage Three

Stage three takes the mechanisms and cues discussed in stages one and two of this investigation, and in previous investigations which can be seen in appendix 1, to begin to develop models based upon the designs investigated. This is intended as a guide for the designer to understand the balance needed to begin to establish trust through the mechanisms and cues featured in such a model, and therefore result in trust being formed through influence, persuasion and conformity.

Results

The models and templates created in this study will establish a foundation for designers going forward in further investigations and analysis of trust online. Further development could potentially look at models and templates progress into functioning sites, to allow them to be reviewed and results collected to understand where influence and persuasion come into play most for trust to be formed rapidly and with greatest effect.

1 Investigating Icons, Symbols & Pictograms of Trust

Investigating semiotics through the treatment of icons, symbols and pictograms to establish visual forms of communication to asist in the trust building activities required to influence and persuade users.

To assist in the translation of the icons, symbols and pictograms and to speed up the trust building process, mechanisms used in today's society were considered to inform and instruct us to behave in a particular fashion. An example being road signs, as shown in figure 1.1a, which provide us a familiar and trusting command to how we must react. As a rule a triangle shape is used as a warning, a circle gives orders and a square or rectangle provide instructions or information. These are merged into the online systems along with new visuals to assess the reactions they cause.

The icons, symbols and pictograms, an example of which can be seen below in figure 1.1b, were to take on a clean, crisp edged design we see day to day. In addition a graffiti/ stencil effect similar to that used in protest was also developed (figure 1.1c and 1.1d). This is to study the change of 'opinion' and 'feeling' of the individual when faced with a more emotive form of expression through the use of design elements.



Figure 1.1a. Existing Road Signs

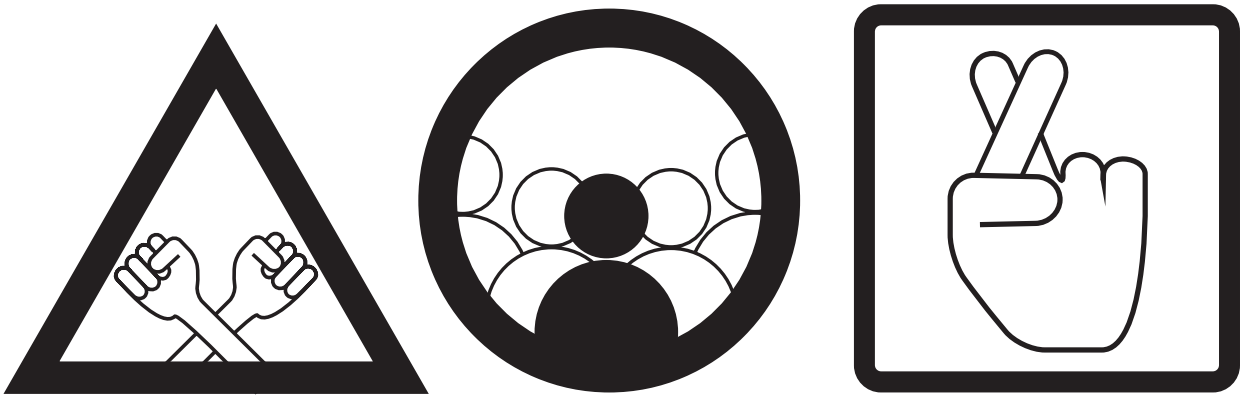


Figure 1.1b. Example of New Signs



Figure 1.1c. Example of Graffiti Icons

Gestures and body language are another form used in real life situations, to determine an emotion or feeling and can help to judge how a person should respond. Symbols in history which remain iconic and powerful forms of expression to present day do just this (figure 1.1e and 1.1f). This idea has been used for many years and can depict strong messaging in its imagery as shown in figure 1.1d which signifies resistence and unity. Another version is also displayed in figure 1.1c, indicating trust and collaboration. Both are attempting to appeal to the onlooker to evoke very different reactions.



Figure 1.1e. Clenched fist salutes



Figure 1.1d. Example of Graffiti Icons

The use of colour has also been considered within the icons, symbols and pictograms but most of these were kept neutral (black) to minimize the impact the colour had on the message.



Figure 1.1f. Buy a Share in America. John C Atherton. 1941

1 Investigating Icons, Symbols & Pictograms of Trust

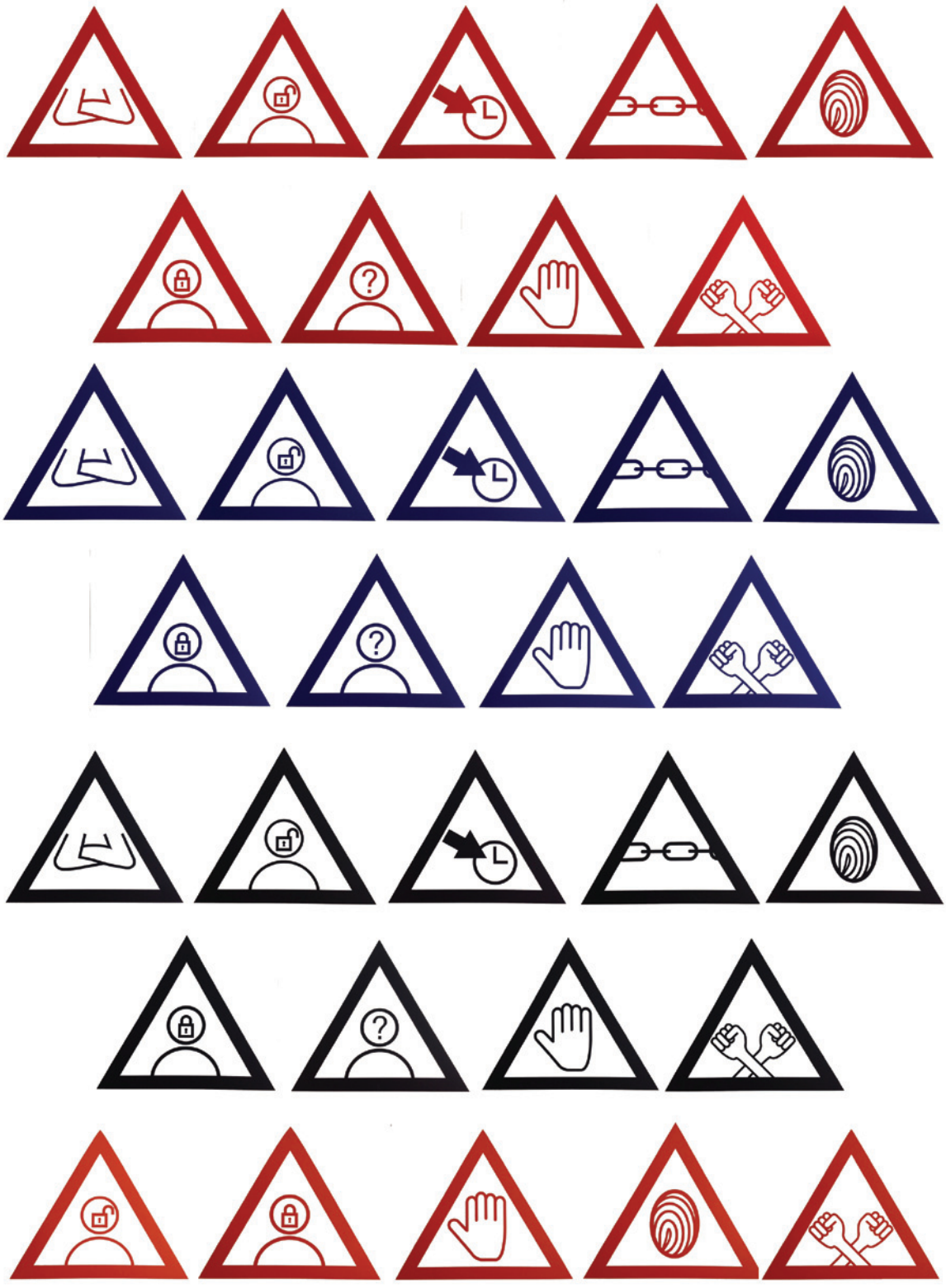


Figure 1.2. Triangular Icons, Symbols & Pictograms - depicting warnings

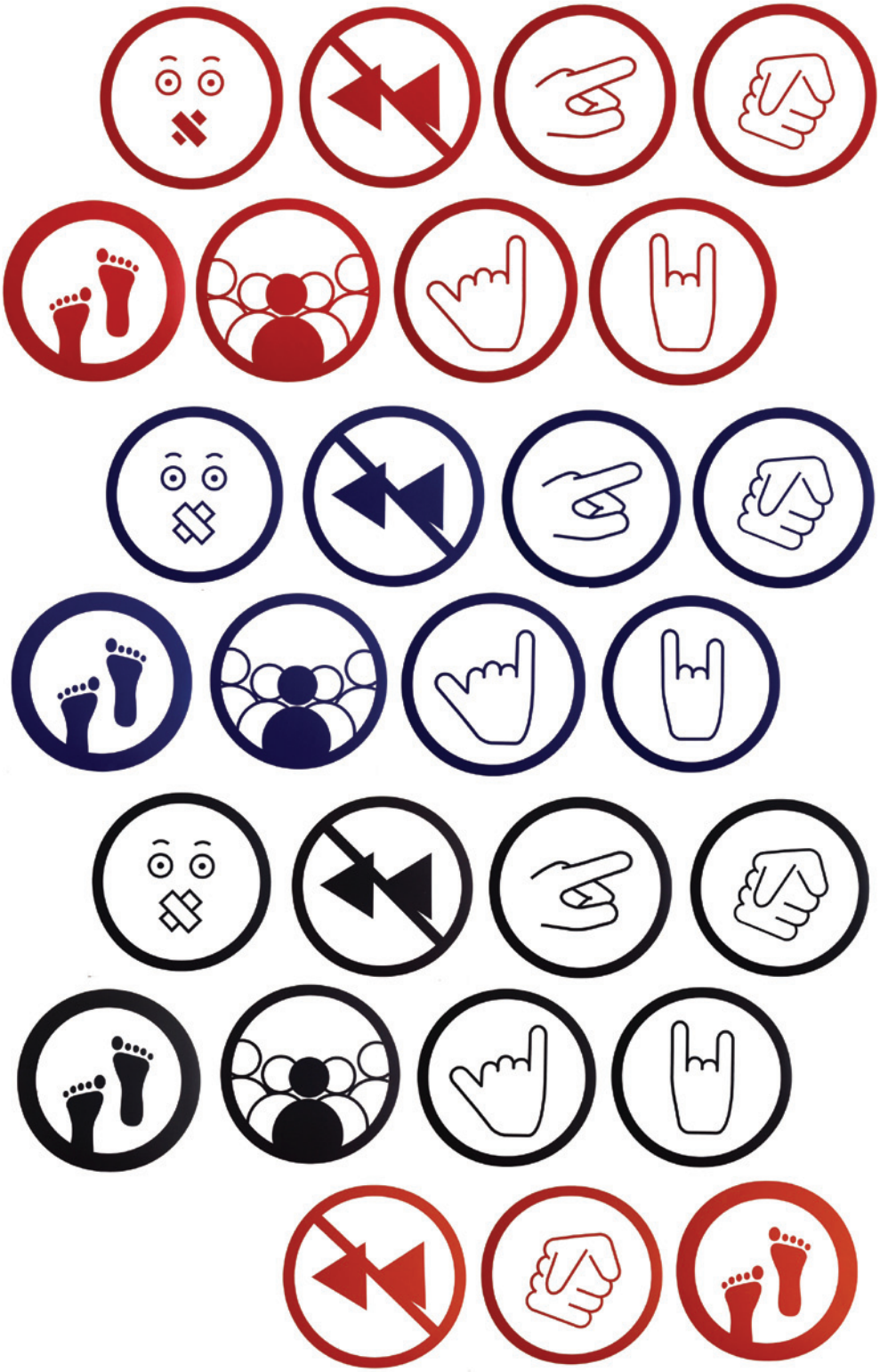


Figure 1.3. Circular Icons, Symbols & Pictograms – giving instructions/orders

1 Investigating Icons, Symbols & Pictograms of Trust

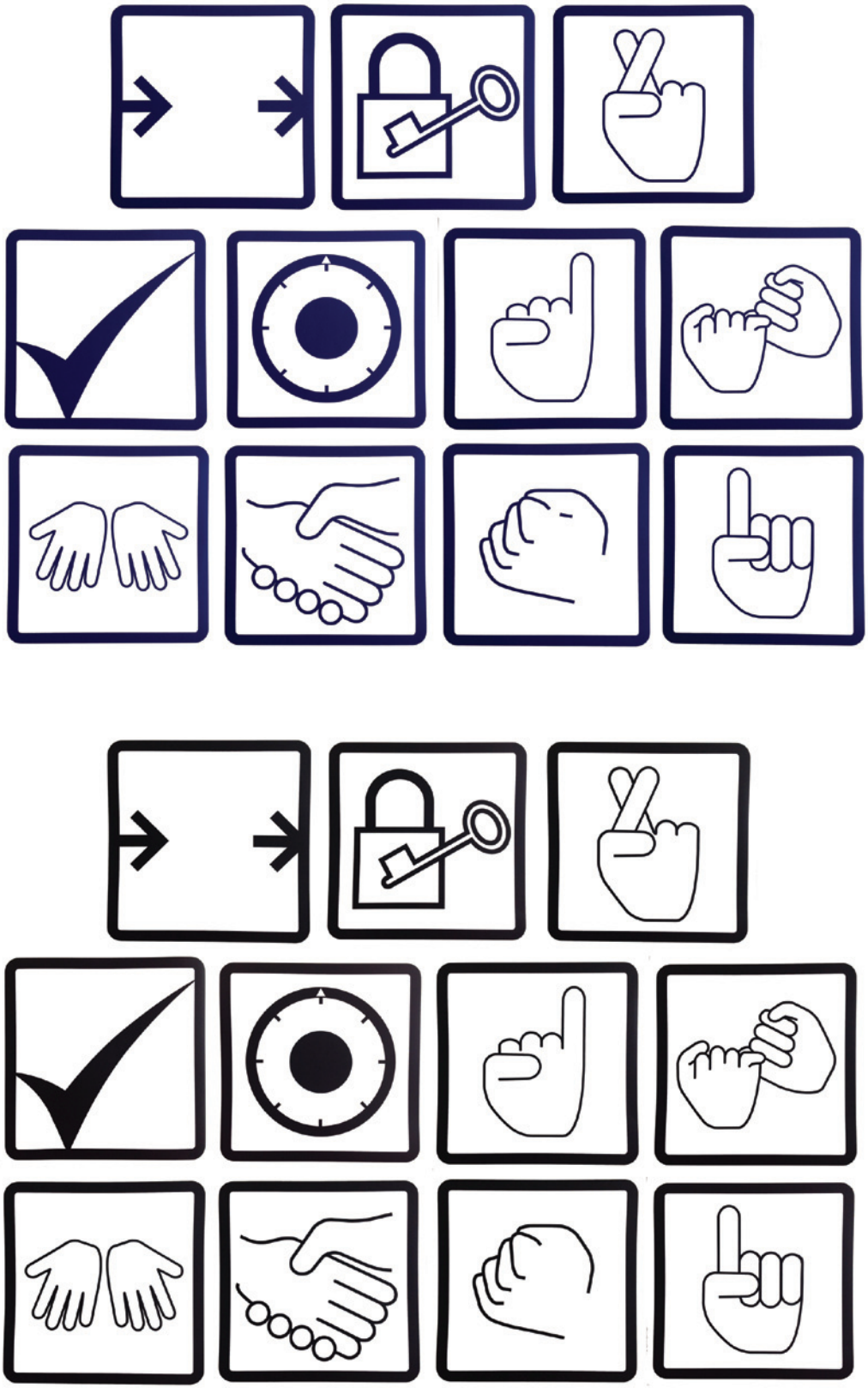


Figure 1.4. Square Icons, Symbols & Pictograms - providing useful information



Figure 1.5. Rectangular Icons, Symbols & Pictograms – providing useful information

1 Investigating Icons, Symbols & Pictograms of Trust



Figure 1.6. Icons, Symbols & Pictograms in a graffiti/stencil effect

To briefly consider the newly formed icons, symbols and pictograms a small assessment was conducted with Survey Monkey to gather the opinions, feelings and interpretation of a selection of individuals.

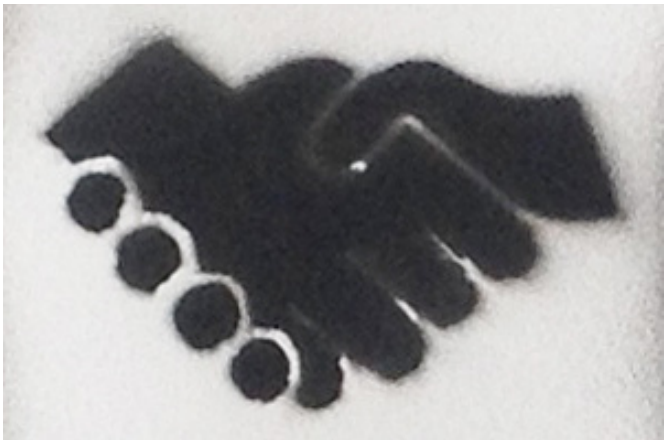


Figure 1.6a Handshake – spray paint effect

The approach shown in figure 1.6a received positive connotations when presented to a selection of individuals, being described as resembling 'united', 'reconciliation', 'welcome', 'happy' and 'reassured'. However when the spray paint is used to depict such a gesture it was discussed that, "...the shadey ness makes me still feel wary." This indicates that viewers were cautious when presented with an unclean graffiti image.



Fgure 1.6b Arms crossed – spray paint effect

In contrast to the handshake, the symbol in figure 1.6b had a very negative response with interpretation being of 'confrontation', 'argumentative', 'unwelcomed', 'fighting' and 'apprehensive' with one person stating, "makes me a bit scared in that stenciled effect, I would definitely KEEP OUT." Both the image and effect combine to reinforce the hostility this symbol portrays.



Figure 1.7 Hands open

Hands open as displayed above in figure 1.7, can be seen in some countries and religions as a symbol of trust with the open hands indicating openness. Many people who were presented with this symbol seemed to respond positively to it describing it as a symbol for 'openness', 'peace' or 'forgiveness' however a few did indicate the possibility of it meaning 'surrender' or 'help'.

1 Investigating Icons, Symbols & Pictograms of Trust



Figure 1.8 Fingers Crossed

Fingers crossed, as to be expected, was seen as a positive symbol with people responding to how it made them feel using words such as, 'hopeful' and 'lucky' though some also respond suggesting it makes them feel nervous and therefore suspicious, "...cross your fingers about what?" Placing such symbols into context could elaborate the meanings and purpose of such symbols.



Figure 1.9 Hand Shake

The handshake symbol received an entirely positive response with phrases such as 'welcome', 'happy' and 'friendly' being used when asked, how this symbol made them feel. This suggests that the clean precise edging creates a clearer definition and translation to its meaning as opposed to a stencil/graffiti effect.



Figure 1.10 Crossed Arms

When the crossed arms gesture was presented within a warning sign triangle most felt this symbol made them feel 'anxious', 'cautious' and 'threatened'. When placed in some context it becomes clear that the action is to 'not enter', 'stay away'. The symbol and conventional warning sign layout combine to reinforce this.

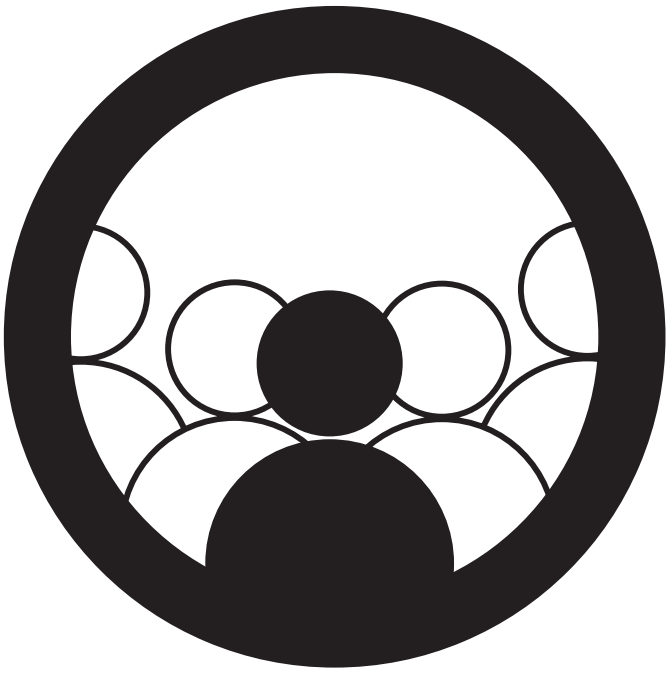


Figure 1.11 Conformity

The creation of the circle icon with a number of figures featured within it symbolizes conformity and establishes a sense of belonging to the onlooker by being part of the group it is representing. In addition, allowing the individual to see themselves as the figure in the foreground as a representation of the category of people who are interacting within this space. This provides them with a sense of authority and achievement as they contribute to the opinions of others.

When presented to individuals, the view was interpreted correctly as 'crowd', 'important person', 'leader', 'speaker'. This shows that this symbol represents authority and importance, which would result in trust being formed due to figures of power being more highly regarded than the general public.

1 Investigating Icons, Symbols & Pictograms of Trust



Figure 1.12. A selection of Icons, Symbols & Pictograms in situ

What was important in this study was to begin to understand, using a selection of the icons, symbols and pictograms, how they are translated when placed in context. Rayan Abdullah and Roger Hubner (2006) discuss the importance context has to play in the interpretation of icons and symbols, "...if the surrounds change, the meaning of the pictogram will also change." This is very important as the icons, symbols and pictogram created here are implemented into online to establish trust.

Concluding Stage 1 - Investigating Icons, Symbols & Pictograms of Trust

Although the icons depicting positive connotations all were interpreted correctly, it became clear that applying a stencil type effect meant the users become more wary and cautious of its purpose and meaning. This therefore weakened its trust building capabilities. When applying such an effect to a negative icon, symbol or pictogram, it emphasised its negative impact even more so, strengthening ithe message it was portraying.

The clean, crisp edged designs were translated with ease however the more detail applied to such graphics caused some confusion as to their meaning. The use of triangles, circles and squares allowed the viewer to use prior knowledge conditioned in society to decipher if the messaging was to warn, inform or instruct them.

Placing the newly created icons, symbols and pictograms into context proved successful in reinforcing the message they portray with one viewer commenting, "...it's funny how some signs make no sense until they're on a door..." It is with this that the placement of visual cues and mechanisms are extremely important in forming trust in the online environment.

As the stages have developed and findings have been made, opportunities to further evolve the icons have been seen. Figure 1.13 is an extension to the feet icon. Its initial purpose was to be directive, however users took the feet literally as opposed to a drective instruction. Many reviewed them to represent, "no walking bare feet" or "walkway" and "no walking". To overcome this it may have benefited from a more solid shape such as shoe prints.



Figure 1.13. Directive footsteps icon

The icon shown in figure 1.14, created to represent conformity, was translated successfully. What is of interest here is how the relationship of the front figure to the others changes depending on the positioning within the circular frame. This opens up opportunities for further research and consideration into whether the viewer identifies with themselves at the front of the group, as indicated by the left icon, or the figurehead or spokesperson for the group, shown in the right hand icon.



Figure 1.14. Conformity icon

Demonstrating Trust Using Visual & Language Tools

2

A series of studies exploring the use of icons, symbols and pictograms of trust created in stage one and also considering language strategies and reputation established in the previous modules.

Stage two produces a series of designs exploring the use of the trust tools established at stage one. In addition it considers the language strategies and reputation established in previous investigations which can be viewed in appendix 1. This will demonstrate the clear indicators needed to build trust for the online user. For trust to grow there needs to be mechanisms and cues built into the system being designed from the offset, for instance, visual elements and language tools. By doing this it can be better understood at what point trust becomes most prominent if at all, and what those key drivers are.

Many studies, including that of Sillence et al (2006,) debate that the first impression individuals receive online is from the look and feel of a site, before conducting a more in depth analysis of the information presented. "A critical part of the first stage of assessing trustworthiness relies on the design of the website" (Sillence et al 2006). Following that we begin to engage, share and influence individuals and groups online using the mechanisms provided. However for trust to take place there needs to be the willingness to be vulnerable.

As discussed by Barak (2008) on the work of Mayer et al (1995) "...without any risk or vulnerability, there is no need for trust."

Five existing systems with very different reputations including banking, government, news, entertainment and an existing reputation system, were explored due to the varying levels of influence and persuasion that can take place in each. This would result in differing levels of trust being formed where opinions vary significantly. Each system was examined to various extremes to better understand at what point trust is gained and in contrast, lost. One of the main goals of this investigation was to allow a better understanding of the cues and mechanisms required in the design of a website and to form a solid design model for future reference.

The following pages explain in detail each system studied.

2 Demonstrating Trust Using Visual & Language Tools

Barclays Bank - Reasons why to make Barclays your bank!

How would we feel about banks if they used the language of the individual to talk to us as an individual?

Implementing a review and/or opinion led tool into such a system is vitally important as building the trust of the consumer is paramount for guaranteed investment in the services they are offering.

The approach shown in figure 2.2 was to create a protest feel to appeal to a wider audience, as though the public is talking instead of the more formal voice of the bank. The aim of this was to take an extreme form of expression and communication that has the characteristics of being created by an individual and placed it into a corporate environment such as a bank.

What is important in such a system is a strong focus on the language being used by implementing personal pronouns such as 'you' and 'your'. This enables the reader to relate to the content, behaving in a persuasive manner. Other emotive words to instill trust used here include, 'secure', 'together', 'safe', 'join' and 'us'. Personal components such as those described "...may make the reader more susceptible to the message that the advertiser is trying to convey..." Hall 2007.

To enforce a particular opinion it is believed that "...the style of typeface can influence how we feel about the sentence" Hall 2007. The font chosen here is more directive and authoritative, one that is similar to those used in protests.

To enhance this approach the symbols used are with a stencil/graffiti effect to draw attention to the viewer and allow a more personal, public feel to the message being conveyed. This effect can look, to some people, as though the brand has been defaced and therefore could reduce the reputation of the bank. In contrast, to others, it arguably could be seen as strong and more public facing.

A project conducted by Occupy London acting as the protestor, saw them creating a newspaper (figure 2.1) utilising the Financial Times font, visual cues and mechanisms of the financial world they were protesting about. This "...added authority and weight..." (Sinclair, 2012) to help build trust in the message they were trying to convey. In doing this they have taken a protest which may lack trust and shown that the designer "...can present the cause in a better way and make it more approachable to different people" (Sinclair, 2012). This reflects the ideas utilised in figure 2.2 which in contrast takes the visual cues of the individual and uses them in the world of the financial corporation.

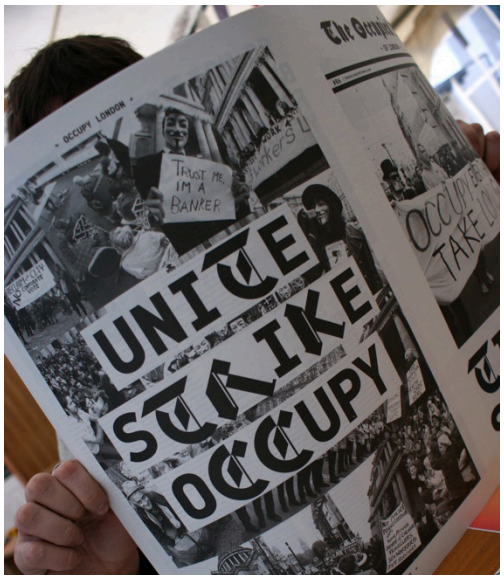


Figure 2.1. CR. A newspaper for the times

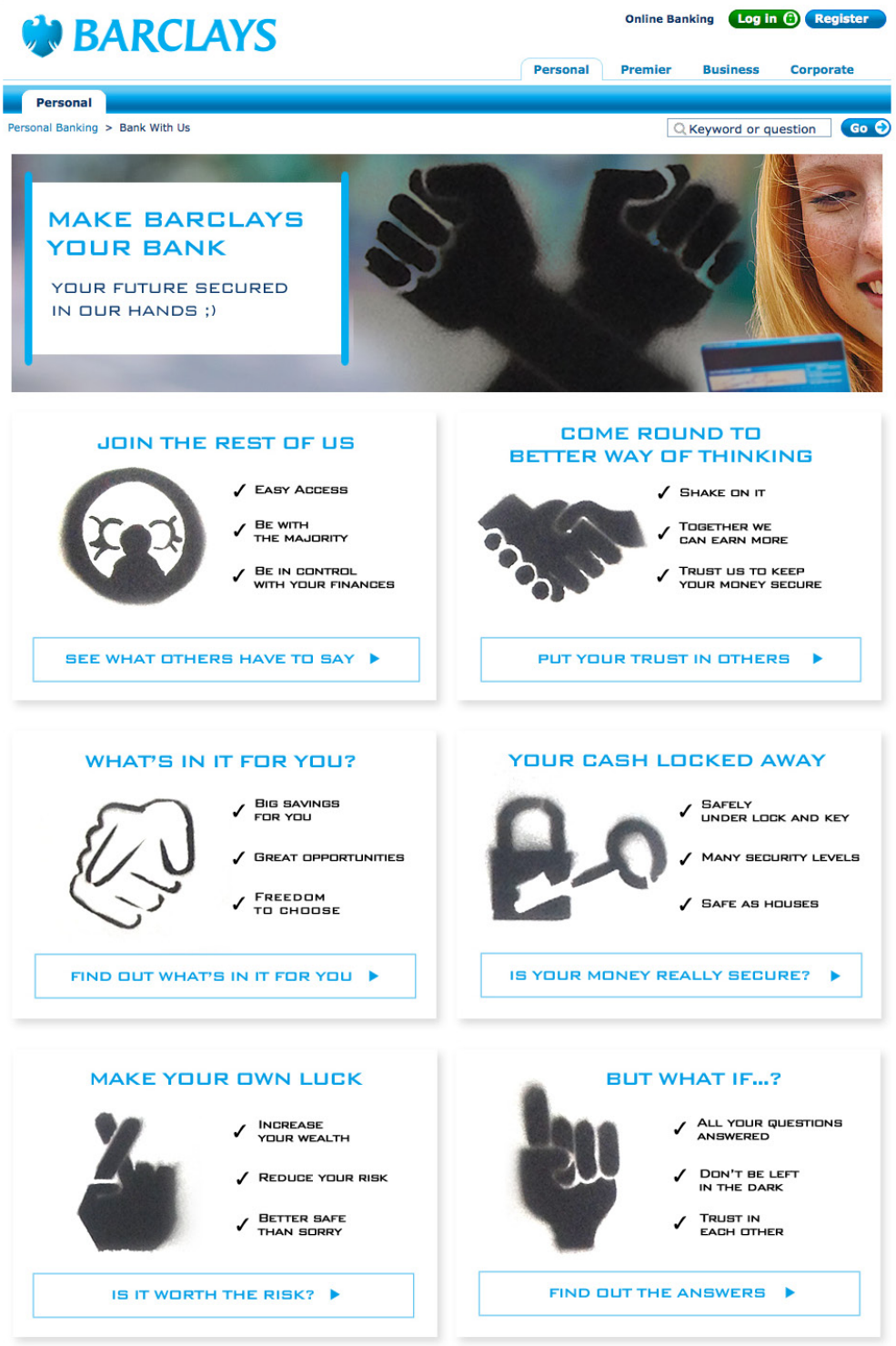


Figure 2.2. Barclays Bank design consideration

2 Demonstrating Trust Using Visual & Language Tools

GOV.UK - Why worry about your future? The government will look after you :)

Many systems are in place to inform but what about those that listen?

With a site such as that in figure 2.2, the Government would be the main communicator providing generic informative messages to its audience. However in such a system as being proposed in figure 2.4 it becomes more than just the Government talking as shown by the model in figure 2.3. What becomes important in this revised system is the communication that takes place from the people and the individual, to the Government. Allowing such an exchange establishes a higher level of trust as the audience feel someone is listening.

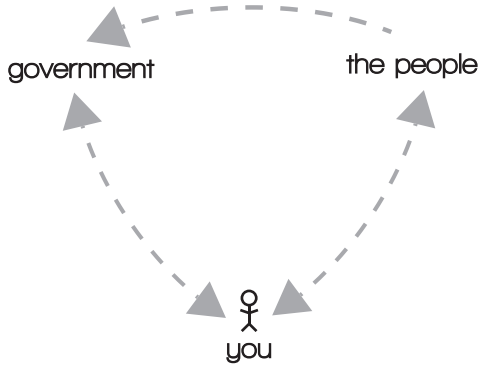


Figure 2.3. GOV.UK communication model

The key focus in this design is the style of language and prosodic (typographic) features used. As stated by Hall, 2007 "...the style in which something is done, can influence how a message is received." Taking away the standard web font is an opportunity to display a more personal voice of the public, establishing trust mechanisms immediately. In this design handwritten questions, as though written by a member of the public, have been implemented rather than a computer generated typed application. This perspective allows a more personal realistic feel to be conveyed assisting in the belief it has come from a member of the public, building trust in what is being said. However the hesitancy of trust may come with the uncertainty in whether the Government may actually be listening.

Interactive elements such as polls/voting systems, live feed and statistical counters can strengthen the belief in the message and allow the user to get a sense of satisfaction and achievement. These are key components of Maslow's Hierachy of Needs (McLeod, S. 2014), as they contribute their opinions and to that of others. This method builds the foundations of trustworthiness as group results strengthen belief. In addition such tools can provide reassurance that the Government may actually be listening.

As established in previous investigations (appendix 1), emoticons have become very popular to express one's tone in the messages being exchanged. Implementing such a system in a normally very serious and direct tool allows a completely different feel for the message being portrayed. A subtle use of emoticons in the title bar works this into the page without it seeming overwhelming.

An additional approach to establish a more personal feel on such a site is by using directive persuasive personalization established in previous studies, in forms such as, 'you', 'your say' and 'what others say' - three key trust building mechanisms.

This design also takes a very familiar quote from an influential person, to display someone of authority contributing to such a system. This builds awareness of the message and potentially reaching a wider audience.

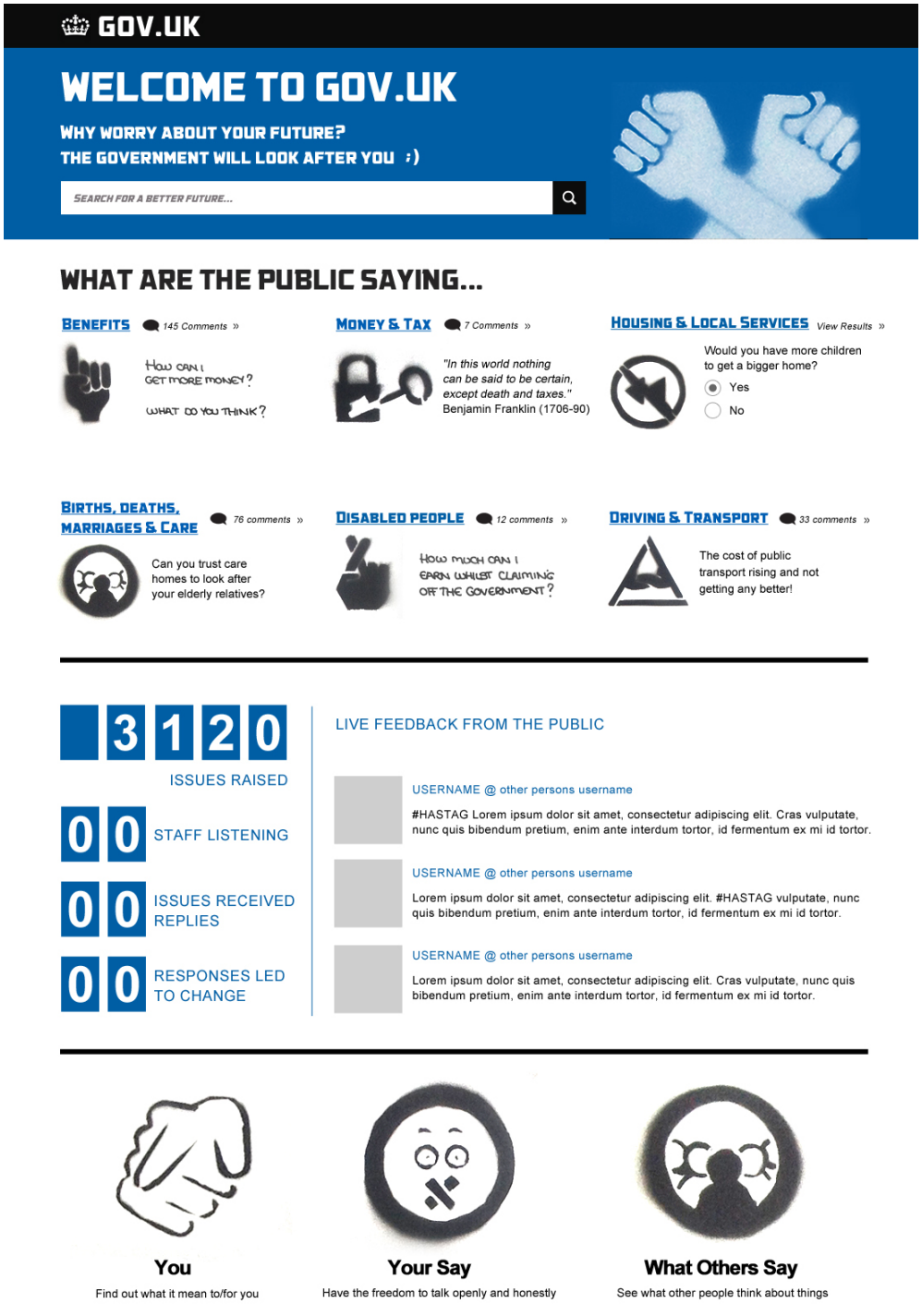


Figure 2.4. GOV.UK design consideration

2 Demonstrating Trust Using Visual & Language Tools

BBC News - Benefits to be scrapped...

Opinions and views are shared continuously but what if those were put to the readers, would this influence their opinions?

Using a story that most likely would evoke a strong reaction allows a study of the journey users take to build trust in the information they are being provided.

Replacement of the lifestyle photography commonly seen at the top of such articles with the newly formed mechanisms and cues of icons, symbols and pictograms can allow an opinion of what is being read to be formed. This immediately begins the trust building process. Such a tool could also be generative and adust to an alternative symbol depending on the reviews and comments being made on the article. Figure 2.5a shows a selection of icons that could be shown to assist in forming an impression of the views being had. Some represent more negative connations whereas others are positive. Such a mechanism allows for easier manipulation, than a photograph, to influence one's opinion.



Figure 2.5a Generative Iconography

Implementing 'Top opinions/Views' within the design assesses if the opinions/reviews of the reader can be led by most popular opinion. In addition, including elite iCitizens' opinions, such as experts, familiar faces and those of influential significance, can have a greater impact and aid the building of trust. In the design being considered for the BBC News article there are opportunities to monitor if the opinions of those iCitizens listed may have any impact on the reader by assessing how many people click and read their opinions, indicating that this has some influential and trusting mechanisms towards the opinion the reader may form.

The inclusion of quotes from 'the public' stating their opinion on the subject would also feature. "Opinions have more legitimacy if we believed they are based on personal experience or the desire to help others through sharing, rather than on the tactics of corporate persuasion" Mooney and Rollins (2008).

Placing copy in quotes indicates that someone once said the statement and therefore comes from personal experience. Blogs have a similar effect, by adding the ability for users to comment their views through a system has the scope to increase trust levels as people express themselves through such methods.

Including a hierarchy of opinions will display whether the 'most popular' opinion leads to conformity as the user trusts the most popular opinion/review to be the best, as also discussed by Mooney and Rollins (2008). They believed that, "...opinions acquire even greater legitmacy if they're grouped with other similar ones or constitute a rating system of popularity or reliability..."



Figure 2.5b BBC News design consideration

2 Demonstrating Trust Using Visual & Language Tools

BBC iPlayer - What did you think of that programme?

Many conversations held are of the previous evening's TV viewing. Would we trust other peoples' opinions to decide whether to watch a programme or not?

BBC iPlayer can be considered a website where strong opinions are held. This is of interest with regards to testing the levels of influence and conformity by the use of ratings in the form of the icons, symbols and pictograms. Language may be of less importance in such a visual system but should still be considered. Depending on the rating given by other users, a reflective icon, symbol or pictogram will be shown with the purpose to instruct or guide the user to form a trusted view of the programme being presented to them based on the opinions/views of others. For example, poor rating presents the crossed clenched fists symbol giving an unwelcomed impression whereas a more positive rating could depict the conformity or thumbs up icon indicating that many others like this.

Although subtle, the rating symbols have been reconsidered, away from the standard star system currently adopted, these icon now reflect the representative symbol that has been used by the reviewer. Further more this design also gives some thought to allowing up to 6 icons, in contrast to the 5 star total seen in most reputation systems today.

In this design the flow was also beginning to be considered with regards to submission of reviews and how these can be controlled by the designer to influence a particular review. Previous investigations have focused on this in depth and is briefly discussed within the Amazon redesign to follow.

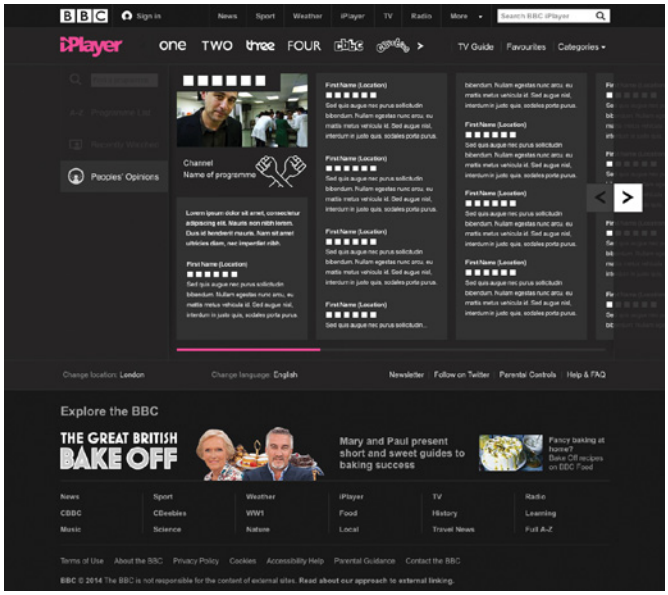


Figure 2.6b BBC iPlayer design consideration

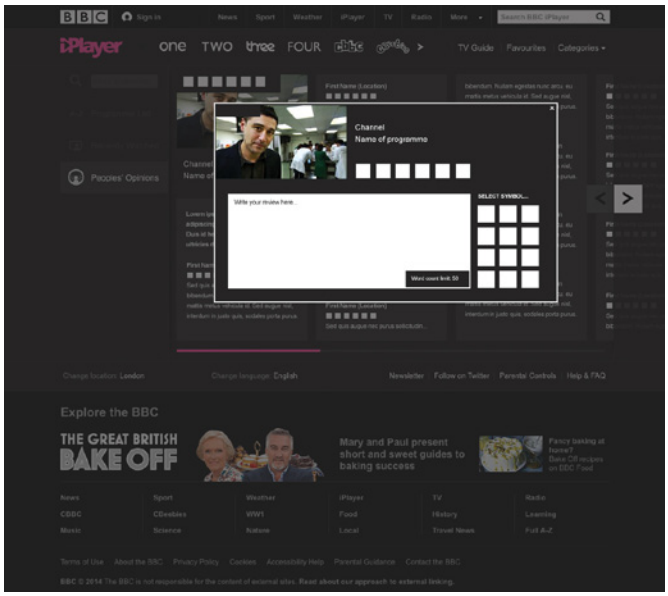


Figure 2.6c BBC iPlayer design consideration

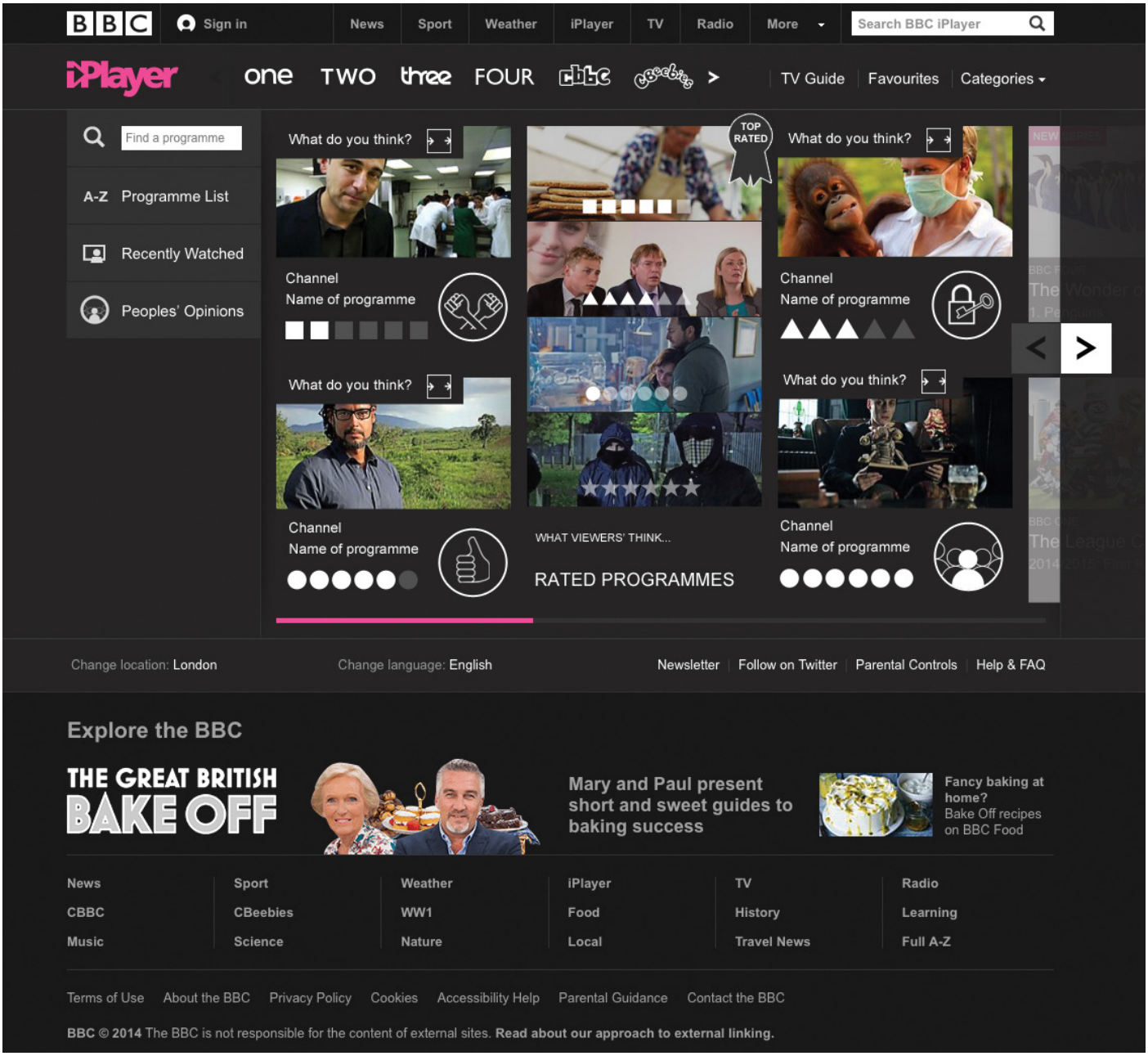


Figure 2.6a BBC iPlayer design consideration

2 Demonstrating Trust Using Visual & Language Tools

Amazon

A very successful review system. But what if we manipulated it to control how users expressed their opinions, could this control how and what they say?

The review submission area of the existing Amazon site was also taken into account. The focus was to adjust how reviews were made depending on the rating being given to gain more control in the opinions being had.

Such considerations are to use positive icons such as thumbs up giving the purpose to drive more reassuring results and comments. The opposite could also be applied to suggest more negative ratings and comments. In addition, the reviewer has the ability to apply a visual tool to represent their opinion allowing for a quicker assessment and formation of opinion by others. The ability to give as low as a zero rating score could provide a stronger level of persuasion as an extreme opinion is evident.

As discovered in previous studies which can be seen in appendix 1, there is a correlation between the amount of words used and the rating score being given in existing review systems. With this in mind it may be that within the commenting field, there could be hidden mechanisms to control the amount of words permitted per review dependent on the rating score. This could have an impact on how the reviewer responds, and whether they adopt other methods to express themselves if they are restricted to how much they can say.

Another method could be to provide tools in the review system such as emoticons, capitalised words or punctuation and see if the uptake of these increase and possibly result in a change of tone in reviews being submitted.

However taking them away at times when they are most likely to be used could display some interesting results also, as reviewers may become frustrated at the difficulty in expressing their opinions and may alter their review.

Many of the elements implemented here were grown from previous investigations (appendix 1) with regards to the patterns seen in existing review systems relating to influence and persuasion. Such elements reviewed in the previous studies were the average number of words dependent on the rating score, the use of prosodic features, affective needs, and persuasive personalization.

These components are important to consider in the final stages of this project as ingredients of trust building mechanisms. However, Amazon is an established tool with an existing trusted reputation so the focus was not so important here for this stage.

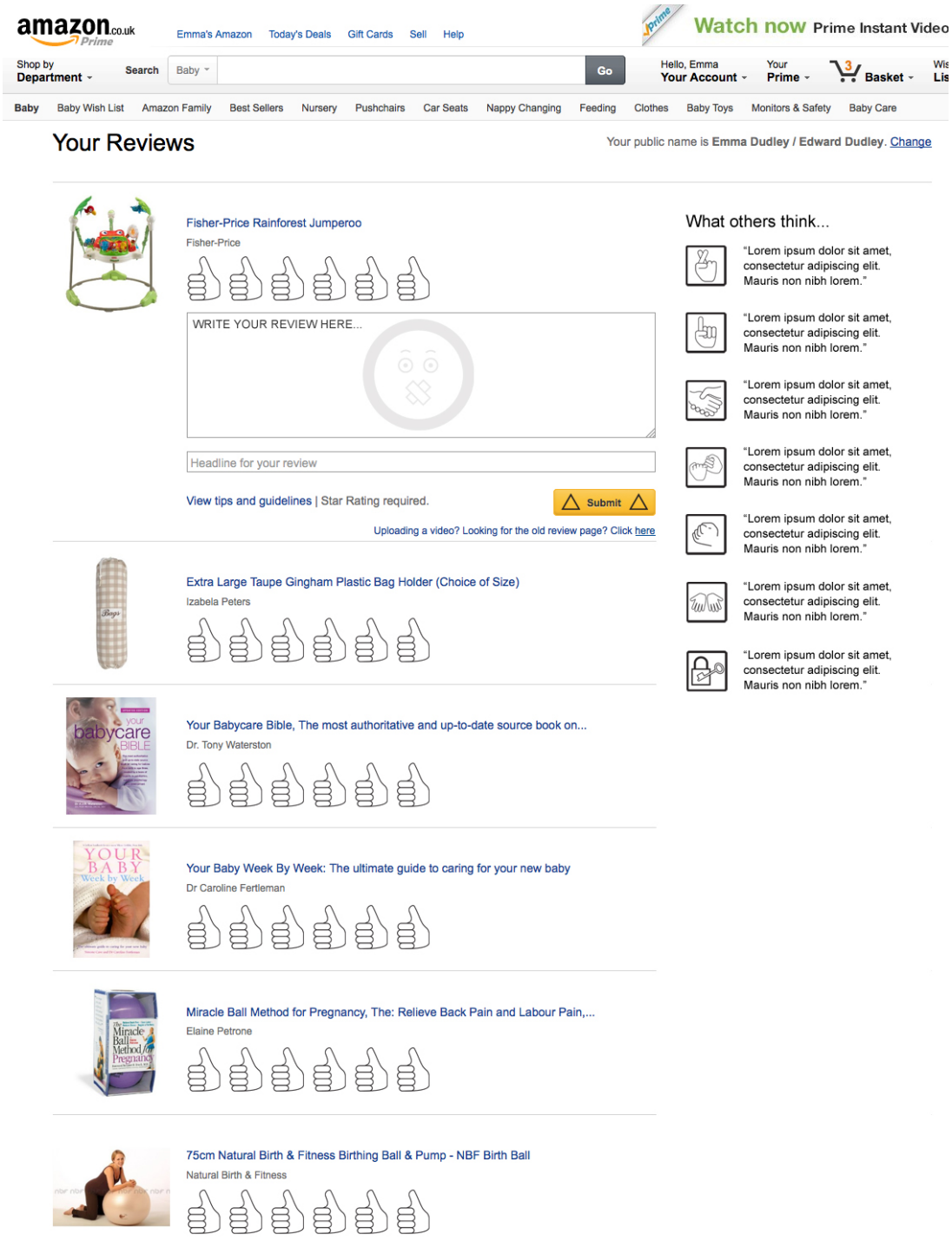


Figure 2.7 Amazon Review Submission design consideration

2 Demonstrating Trust Using Visual & Language Tools

Conclusion of stage 2

On reflection, the use of icons with a stencil/ graffiti effect within banking websites, particularly on front facing prominent pages such as Barclays shown in figure 2.8, may not have such a profound effect as it may do in other environments. For Barclays it may in fact negatively affect the reputation of the bank as opposed to forming any positive results.



Figure 2.8. Barclays Bank

The main focus with banking sites is to sell services, and the public opinion would potentially come in at a later stage within a review/commenting system following experiences had.

With such a system the customer initially needs reassurance to trust the bank to look after their money and wishes to be provided with information instead of visuals. Such a style of iconography could create more uncertainty and cause users to be wary to its relevance and importance and may be reluctant to proceed.

Taking this into consideration it would be fair to conclude here that language is of the upmost importance to establish trust in such a system.

The approach in this system is one of language strategies including prosodic features which in particular has looked at the style and the prominence of typeface used. Emotive function has also been factored by directing the language towards to the customer to give it more personal characteristics, and in addition including positive connations. It is this that is the strongest mechanism to be used for such a system that needs to provide information prior to influencing and persuading and therefore establishing trust.

The stencil effect has been described as creating a feeling of caution and apprehensiveness from the feedback gathered in stage one. Therefore the stencil effect iconography would be more suited to Government (figure 2.9) led websites where the public have the power in the form of voting.

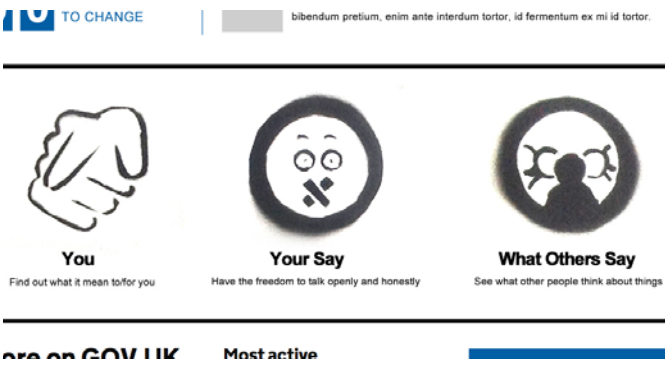


Figure 2.9. GOV.UK

Many systems are in place to inform but what about those that listen?

It can be argued that many would feel they have no influence on the future whatsoever and they do not trust that the Government are listening due to not seeing feedback or results from issues that may have been raised. Implementing a tool such as graffiti gives a protest stance, making a point and changes a standard site to a more natural influential one where the public opinion is paramount. Care would be needed to achieve the correct balance between a sense of patronization, versus freedom of expression and opinion.

In addition to ensuring the Government are listening the style of language and prosodic (typographic) features have been considered to convey the message in the correct form for the audience who view it.

The BBC News website explores the opportunity to bring in generative content (figure 2.10) that changes depending on the views being left by the public. Placement of such tools could influence others before the article has even been read, therefore making use of cues and mechanisms to aid the trust building process.



Figure 2.10. BBC News

In this design, hierarchy has been considered in forms of 'most popular views/opinions'. In addition the icon currently used has this connation also, implying a leader of the crowd concept. Both mechanism can be extremely strong in influencng others as it is seen that majority and the most popular opinion is to be a trustworthy one.

Language has also been considered in this system to provide a more public orientated interface as users contribute their views on the topic and this results in a sense of satisfaction and achievement. In addition seeing other users' opinions in what is being presented to them holds a significant amount of legitmacy as it is seen to have come from personal experience and therefore increasing the levels of trust. Future developments should consider the balance of the mechanisms and cues used, as they should work together to influence and persuade. If one element stands out this can delay the process of analysing the site and the forming of trust.

2 Demonstrating Trust Using Visual & Language Tools

A system which has little at stake for the public is that of BBC iPlayer due to its use being for pure entertainment, not investment purposes. Nevertheless this system has the potential to be of great influence as opinions are continuously shared on programmes being viewed (figure 2.11). Publicising such views could have extremely strong persuasive factors and impact viewing figures on current and future screenings.



Figure 2.11. BBC iPlayer

Another system considered here is that of Amazon, figure 2.12.

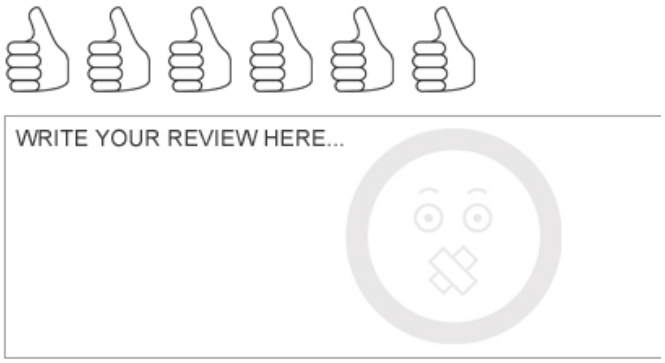


Figure 2.12. Amazon Review Submission

As an established tool with an existing trusted reputation, this study's focus was on the manipulation of the current system, experimenting with trust mechanisms and cues to reshape the opinions and views casted.

Of the designs explored the BBC News site was of the greatest interest as by definition, it is where many opinions are held and exchanged online and offline. This is the area chosen for focus in further studies.

2

3 Design Model & Considerations

Following the investigations conducted in this study, models can now be formed to establish rules for designers to aid in the trust building process online, by influencing and persuading the users. This can be achieved by the use of mechanisms and cues implemented by the designer.

There are existing models such as one produced from the studies conducted by Sillence et al (2006) as shown in figure 3.0a that begin to discuss the process of persuasion, influence and trust online.

This model depicts the stages in which users assess the trustworthiness of websites. It is very important to consider this model alongside new findings being established in this investigation. Figure 3.0a shows that initially users base their interest on a site using the design elements presented to them, before proceeding to conduct a more in depth analysis. What is key to take away from this is the importance first impressions have in forming the building blocks of trust to allow users to proceed further into the website. It is clear in the studies conducted by Sillence et al (2006) that the visual components are of the highest importance.

The model featured in figure 3.0a, though a valuable source of reference, does not solve the detail required to achieve this process successfully. Regardless of the processing it is important to understand the cues and mechanisms required to influence and persuade the audience to proceed into the site. Without this the site remains unsuccessful.

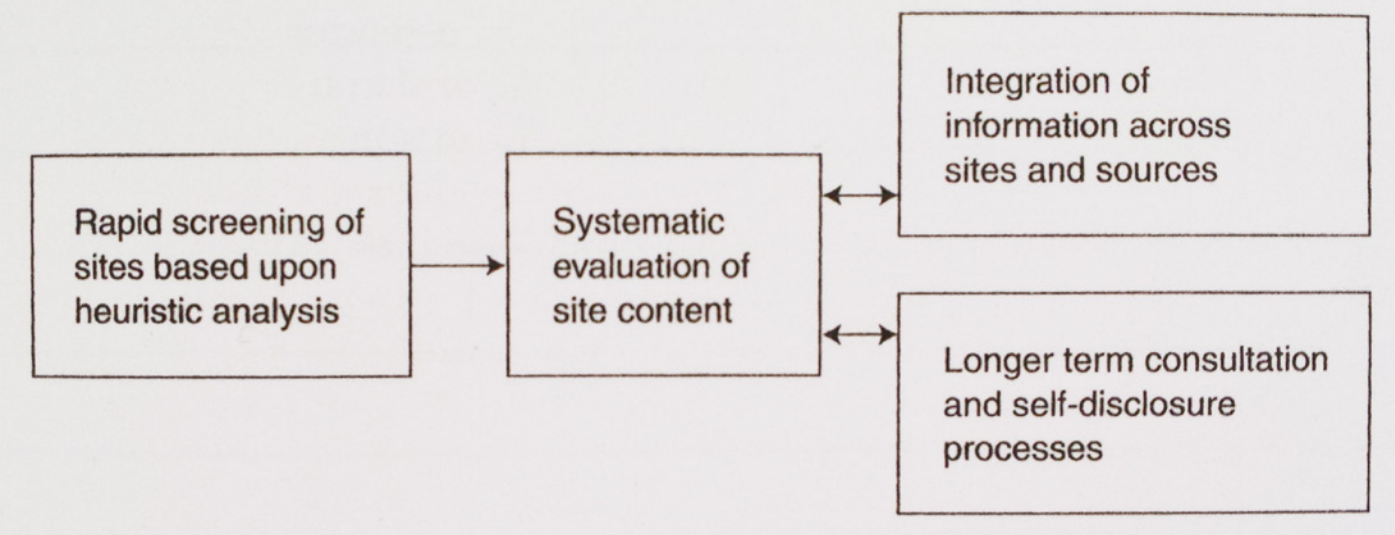


Figure 3.0a Staged model of trust (adapted from Sillence et al. 2006)

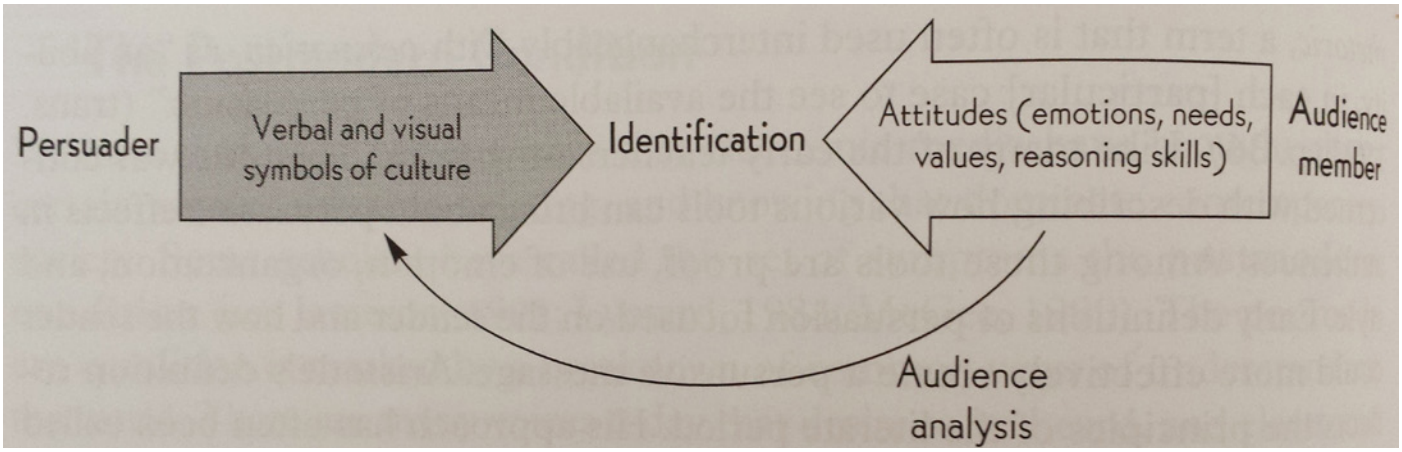


Figure 3.0b Definition of Persuasion

Another model in this field of study is Burke's Theory. Burke's model shown in figure 3.0b considers how "...persuaders can identify with audience members by using language..." Borchers (2005). This model is similar to that being investigated in this report. The persuader has the ability to use verbal and visual cues and mechanisms that the audience and users can identify with to evoke some form of reaction, whilst analysing the information presented before them.

This model works in its simpliest form. However for the studies in this report it is felt that it misses many persuasive and influential aspects that should be considered in the design process. This includes, reputation and also language in a broader sense taking into consideration the use of prosodic and emotive functions.

Burke also believed that persuasion is predominantly audience controlled however it is felt in the studies conducted in this report that with the right mechanisms in place the designer can maintain a great deal of control over the actions and opinions of the users.

3 Design Model & Considerations

Following the investigations conducted in this study, models can now be formed to establish rules for systems designers to aid in the trust building process by influencing and persuading the users with the use of mechanisms and cues implemented by the designer.

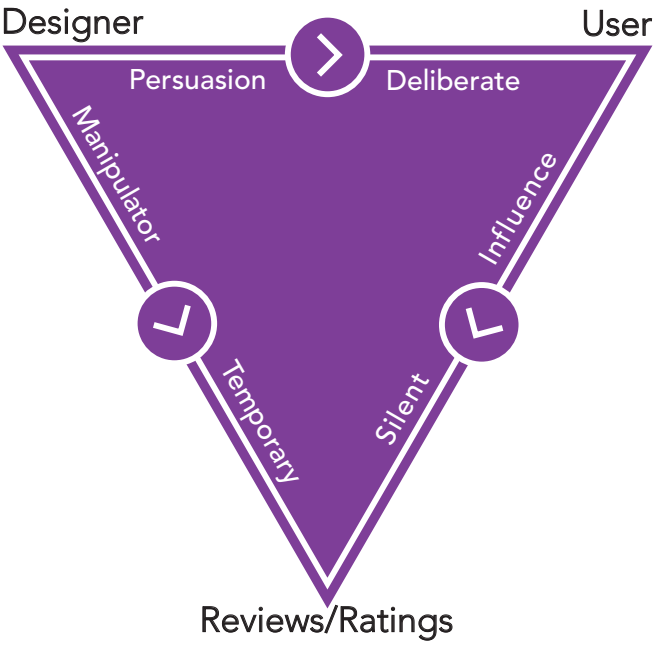


Figure 3.1a Design Model - influence and persuasion

Figure 3.1a, developed in previous studies (appendix 1), displays the process of persuading which deliberately manipulates what the user sees and how the user will form their opinions from this. Influencing works silently to form a particular opinion by the way the designer has organised the content. All these mechanisms were studied in a review/ rating system environment.

With this in mind and to bring in the new component of trust a new model has been considered. It is important to bring these areas together because for influence, persuasion and conformity to take place trust needs to be gained. This is done through the mechanisms and cues of reputation, visual elements and language strategies.

Figure 3.1b shows the model in its simpliest form and bringing the key mechanisms that need to be considered.

The top left area features visual as a key component to be considered by the designer in the system it is being applied to. This is a tool that can be used to persuade the user, therefore deliberately adjusting the system to evoke a desired response and conform to the rules set before them. Language is another tool that is to be considered by the designer. However, language can also be very much controlled by the user from the visual components they are presented and the tools provided to them to express their opinion. The designer still remains in control of language but without careful consideration the user can take back control of this mechanism. With this form of communication from both the designer and user, influence is being conducted.

As shown in figure 3.1a, influence happens silently and the user can be unaware of the power this has particularly when viewing language from another source other than themselves, such as in review systems. The third component to be considered is reputation. This is the area which has the lowest level of control for the designer as the reputation of a system can be already established and it is the brand which drives this. However the reputation also comes in the form of review and rating systems and these can be manipulated to form a desired response. Most importantly it is reputation that carries the highest level of conformity as users often are seen to follow the majority and group trends as this is seen in itself to be trustworthy.

The three main mechanisms of visual, language and reputation can adjust in size and prominence depending on the system they are representing and how the designer controls these. However to establish the right levels of persuasion, influence and conformity the mechanisms must be of equal weighting and prominence otherwise trust can not be formed. A reduction in any of these areas, if to a large extent, may adversely affect the level of trust.

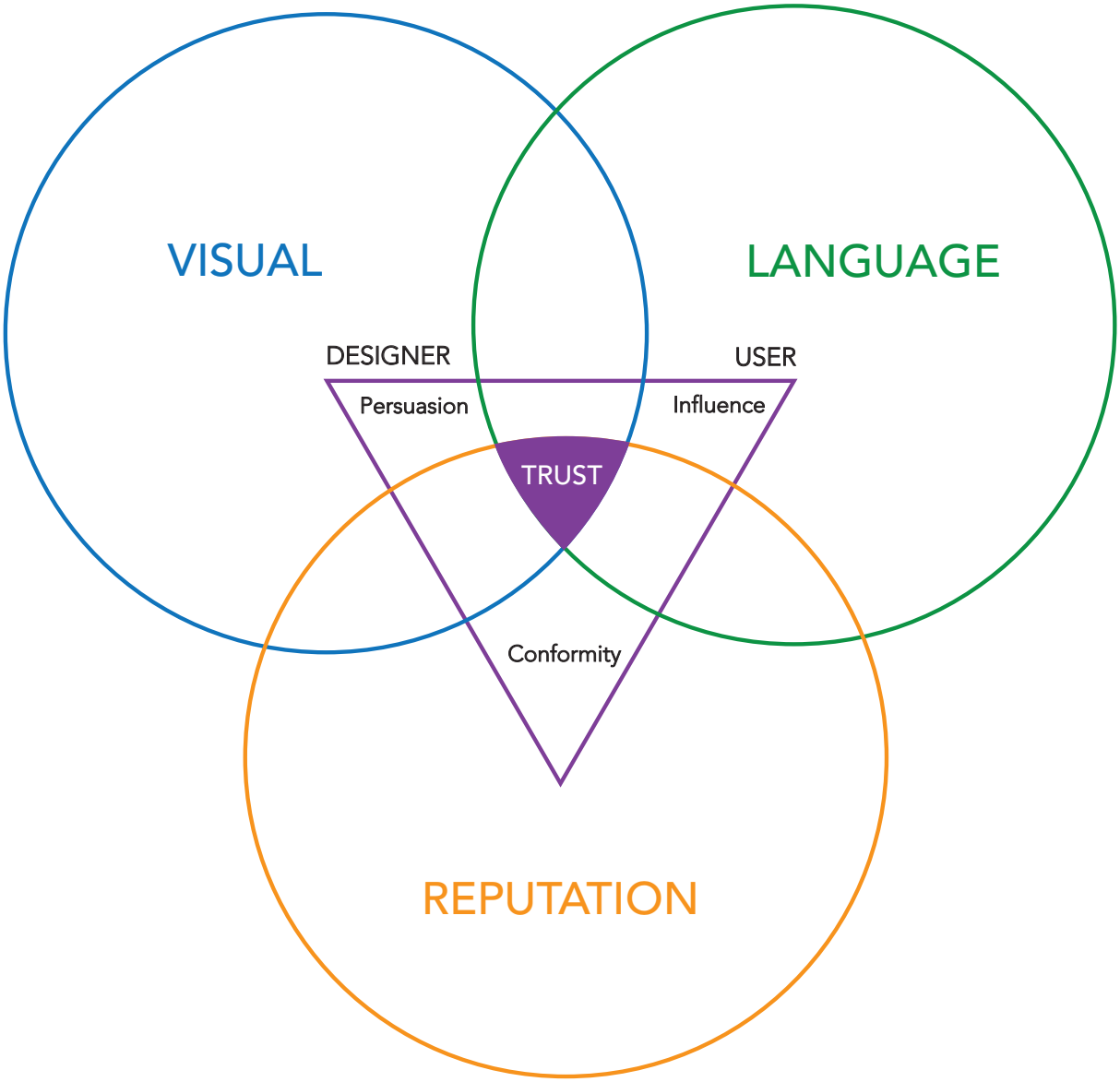


Figure 3.1b Design model to establish trust

3 Design Model & Considerations

Barclays Bank

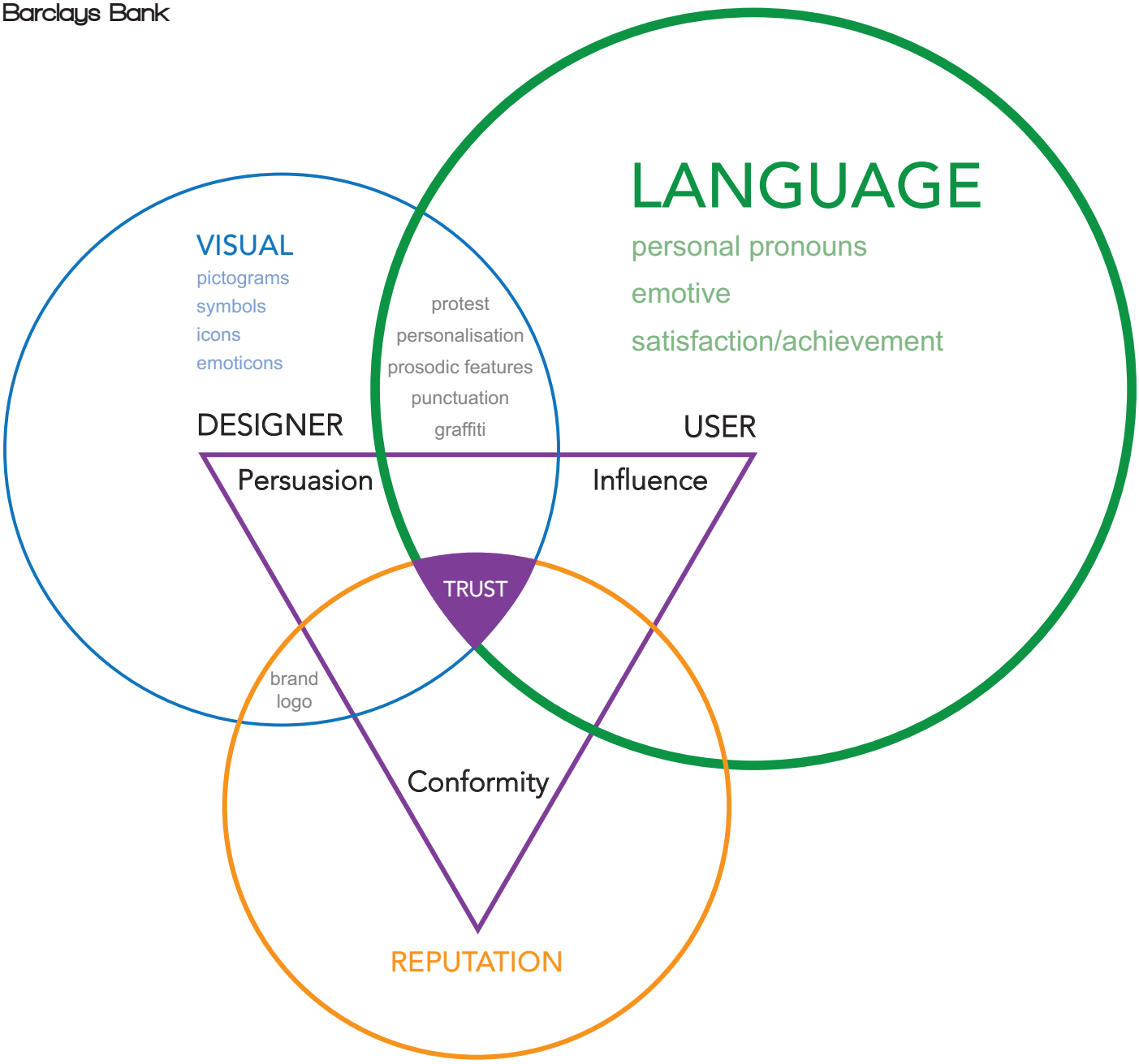


Figure 3.2a Design model for Barclays Bank



Figure 3.2b Barclays Bank redesign

The model featured in figure 3.2a depicts the balance between visual, language and reputation in the design of the Barclays system, figure 3.2b. As discussed in stage 2, with such a system it is vitally important to build the trust of consumer. The use of a protest style visual mechanism reduces the reputation and therefore reduces the level of trust gained.

For that reason language is the key aspect to be considered by the designer of such a system, to use personal pronouns and emotive language to evoke a reaction from the user. In doing so the users themselves also contribute their opinions by use of language, giving a sense of gratification as they play a part in the system and the opinions of others, all assisting to form trust.

Although of a smaller scale and therefore of less significance as shown in the model, the visual should always be considered as argued by Sillence et al (2006). "Engage in rapid, heuristic-based analysis on the design of the site rather than the content." With this in mind and considering a system where language is of such importance the presentation of language should be considered to allow for the initial analysis that takes place. To achieve this, the use of typographic styles known as prosodic features, personalisation and punctuation can allow the language to take on a visual approach for those initial interpretations and trust building activities. An example of this can be found in figure 3.2c.



Figure 3.2c Example use Prosodic features, personalisation and punctuation

Despite these tools being important, the reputation of such a system is paramount. It is this that the designer has little or no control over and why the language and visual elements need such a strong emphasise to overcome the trust barriers potentially formed by the brand itself. The reputation of the brand, and peoples' connotations with the logo all stem from this.

3 Design Model & Considerations

Barclays Bank - Original

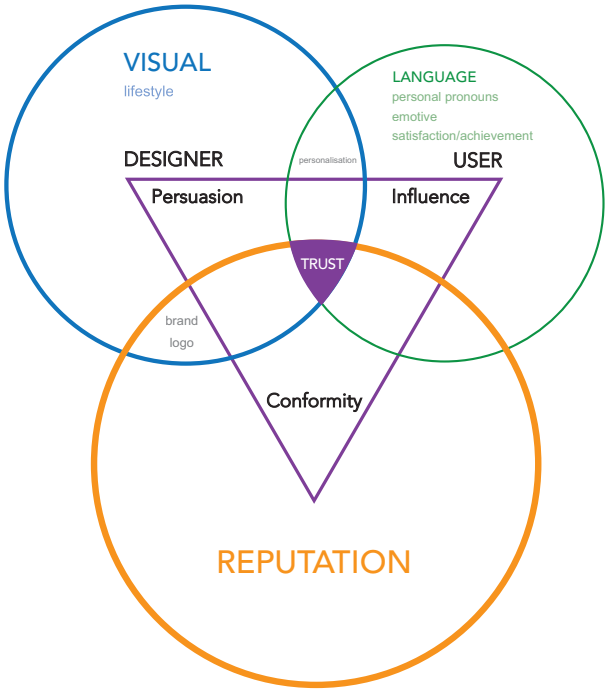


Figure 3.2d Design model for Barclays Bank - Based on Current Site

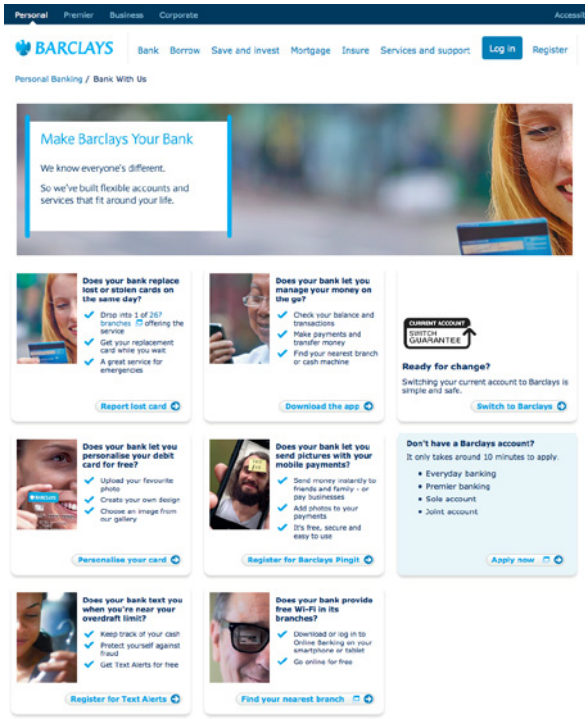


Figure 3.2e Barclays Bank Current Design

Figure 3.2d depicts a design model for Barclays Bank based upon the mechanisms used to communicate to their customers at present. Put into the model, language is weakest here due to the heavy amount of copy. Despite using personalisation for the headlines Barclays immediate focus is on the action that is required to join, forgetting the process needed to influence and persuade customers and to establish trust.

It becomes apparent that Barclays appear to be relying on their reputation and are forgetting the right balance of visual and language mechanisms and cues needed to influence and persuade their customers to trust in the services they are offering.

The use of lifestyle imagery works better here than the graffiti iconography seen in figure 3.2b. Using such imagery provides a visual mechanism that users can relate to, although it could be argued that the use of stock imagery is too generic to reach the target audience. What is important to remember in such a system is to establish trust, language is key to portray the services being offered.

Barclays Bank - Balanced

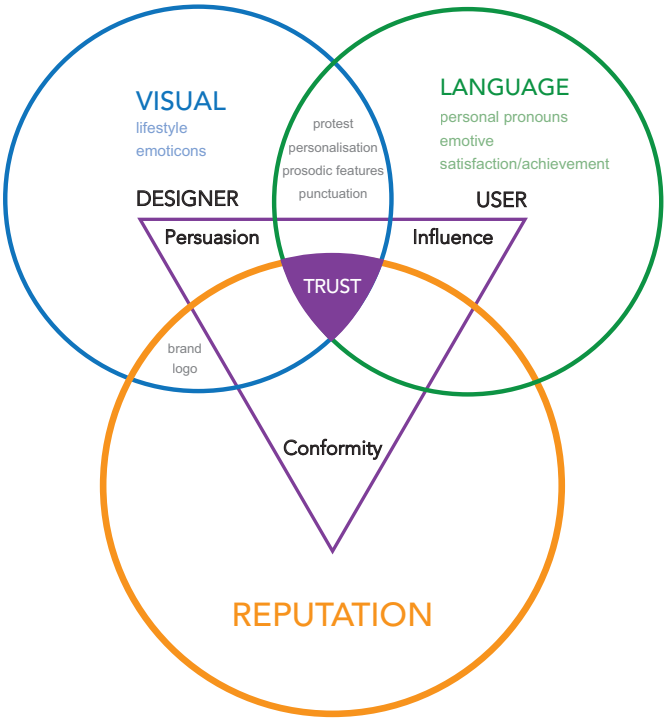


Figure 3.2f Design model for Barclays Bank - combining Current and New

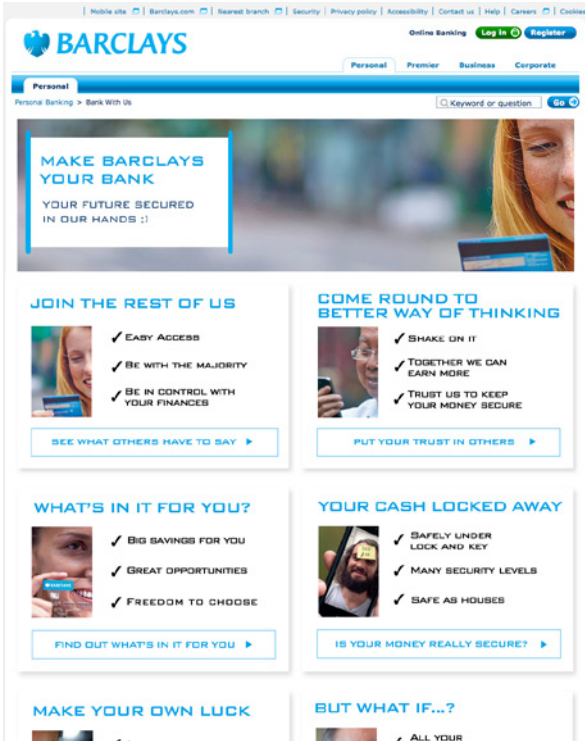


Figure 3.2g Barclays Bank redesign

Taking into consideration the current system with the use of lifestyle imagery but weak language strategies, a model has been developed to display a stronger approach for both of these and established a more balanced approached to achieve optimum levels of trust.

What must be remembered is the one component that is the main goal, is that of trust. Trust is what needs to be aimed for when designing systems for interactiion.

The levels of trust changes dependent on the success of the mechanisms and cues used by the designer. It is trust we are targeting to successfully bring about user engagement, influence and persuasion.

3 Design Model & Considerations

GOV.UK

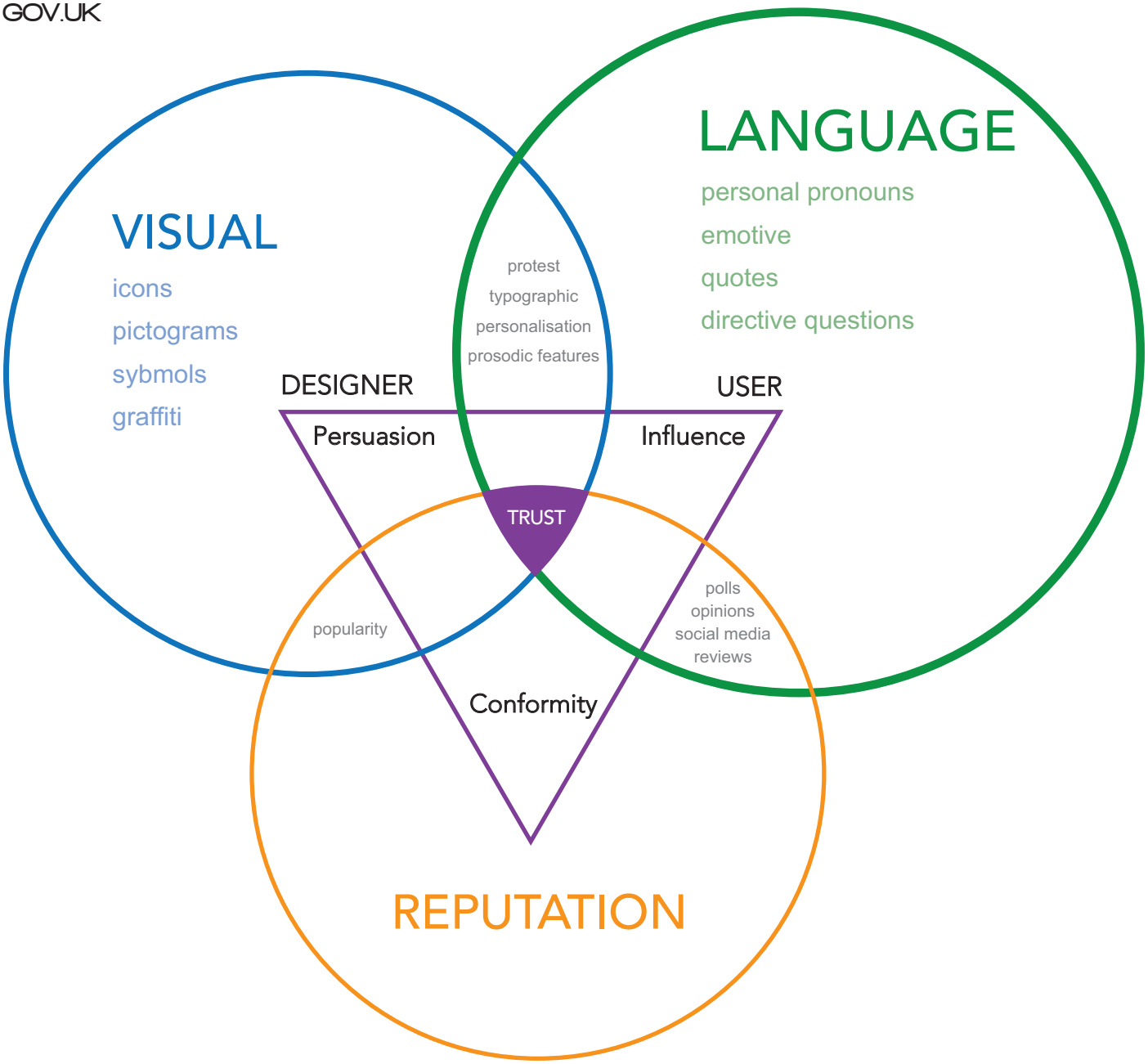


Figure 3.3a Design model for GOV.UK



Figure 3.3b GOV.UK redesign

The model in figure 3.3a is more balanced than that shown for the Barclays system. However on a Government website it is still the voice and therefore the language that matters most.

With such a system it is important there is a clear two way communication taking place and to achieve this, language is therefore the most valuable mechanism to be considered. Cues such as personal pronouns, emotive functions, quotes and directive questions reduce any uncertainty and increase the levels of trust between the Government and the public. An example of this can be seen in figure 3.3c. As discussed by Barak (2008) "...researchers have found that on the Internet individuals go about reducing uncertainty by asking more direct, probing questions.." To have this ability within the system is critical to remove any form of doubt in the audiences' mind and establish trust immediately.



Figure 3.3c Example of probing directive questioning

It is worth considering the visual elements briefly which do not sit out of place as they did for the Barclays Bank design, due to the subject and audience being familiar with the protest form of expression, thus it is far more suited here.

In such a system a reputation has already be defined. Although it could be argued that reputation could be less of an issue for the government, as people can easily switch banks. Nonetheless the visual and language for the Government website needs to work harder to communicate to the audience by use of cue and mechanisms and trust building activities.

3 Design Model & Considerations

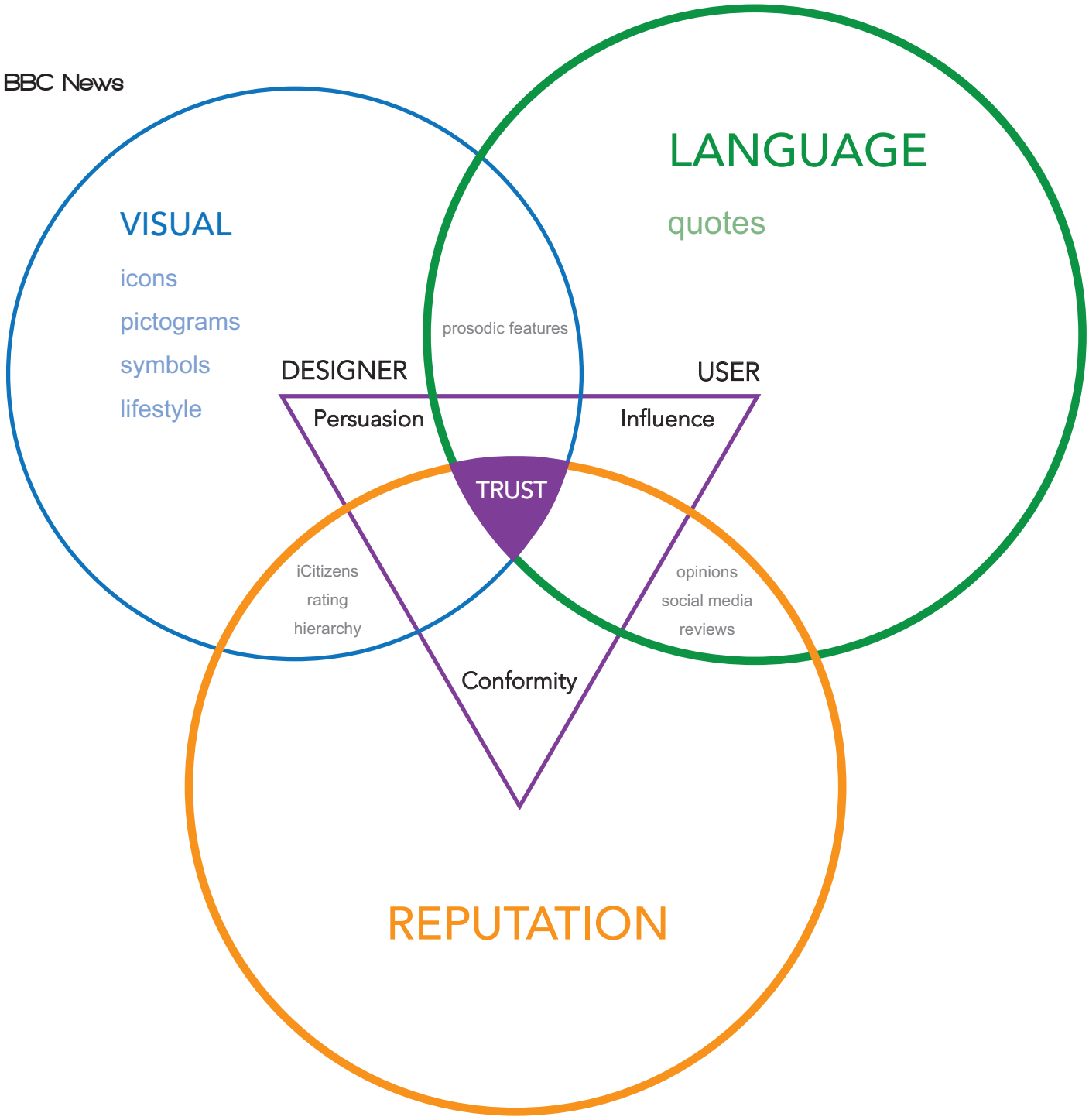


Figure 3.4a Design model for BBC News



Figure 3.4b BBC News website redesign

Similar to that of the Government design model, the language is more prominent in the system shown in figure 3.4b. The quantity of text featured is unavoidable in a system where articles and reports are written. Nonetheless, by using short sharp headings, this provides enough of the linguistic cues needed to convey some level of trustworthiness without permitting the time to read the whole article.

To achieve more of a balance between the visual and language components the introduction of generative icongraphy into the design is important. This would provide a mechanism to adust to an alternative symbol depending on the reviews and comments being made on the article, results in visual raising to the same level of importance.



Figure 3.4c Generative iconography

The addition of a popularity system contributes to the mechanisms shown in the design model by creating a visual representation of reputation by the use of cues such as influential iCitizens and hierarchy. Using such approaches allows for a more balanced feel across the design between language, visual and reputation.



Figure 3.4d Popularity mechanisms

Implementing a mechanism based upon popularity, as shown in figure 3.4d, allows further validity for the audience, as a collective opinion provides more reliability and therefore trustworthiness.

Other systems such as the reputation system of eBay, adopt mechanisms to display popularity to their users. Reviews do just this, in addition using tools to allow the ability to search by popularity of an item, or a counter monitoring how many views an item has had or how many have been sold.

3 Design Model & Considerations

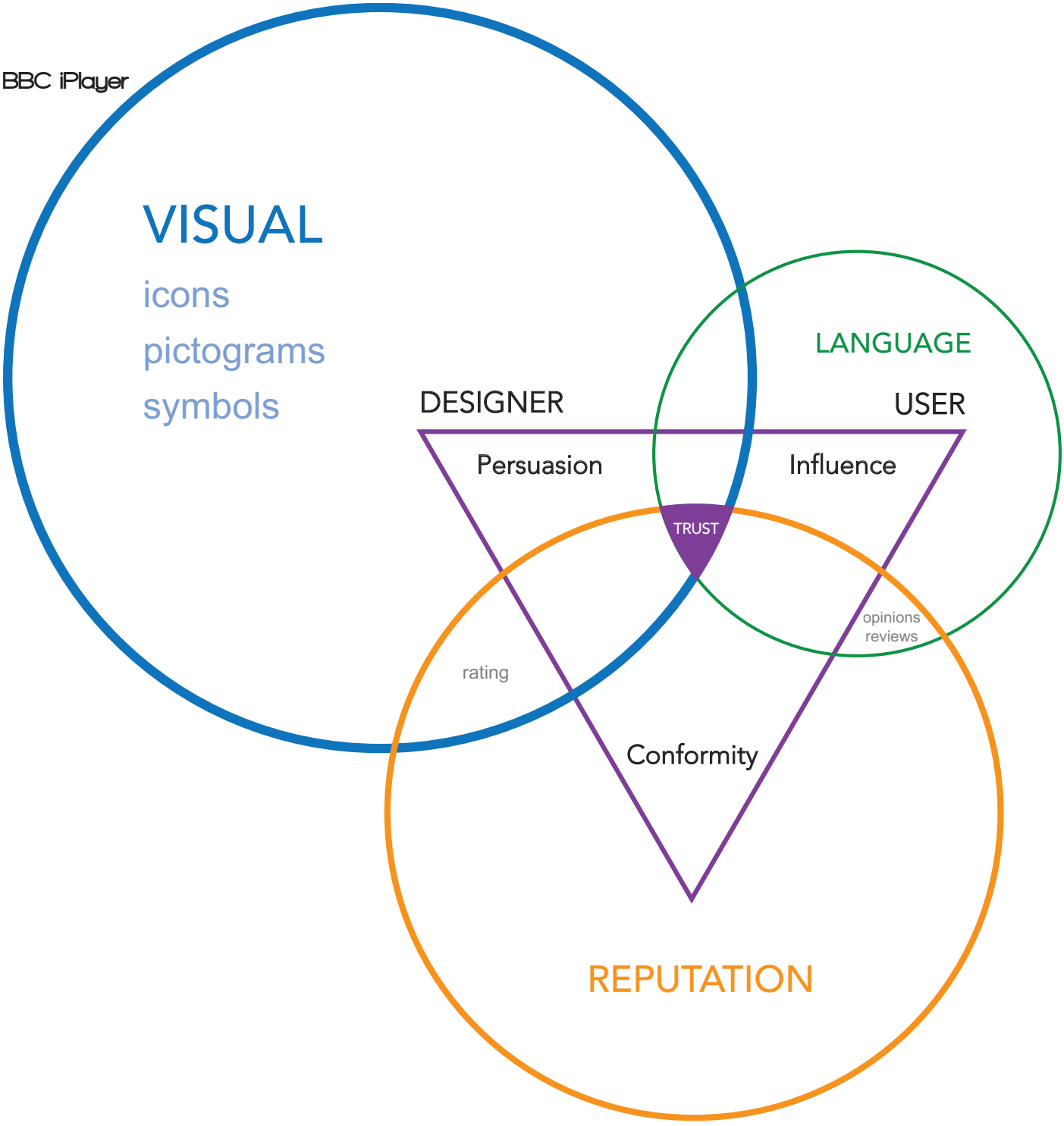


Figure 3.5a Design model for BBC iPlayer

3

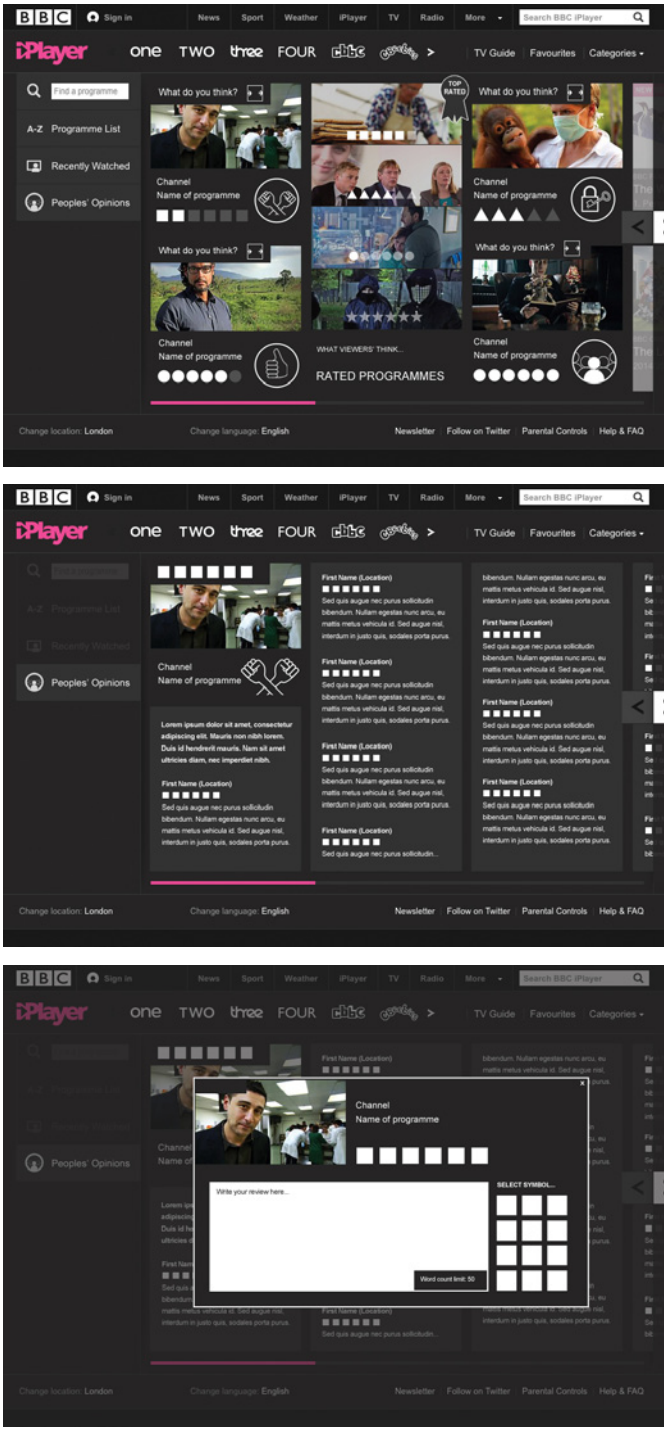


Figure 3.5b BBC iPlayer website redesign

The BBC iPlayer works differently to the designs investigated previously. It is a far more visual system heavily reliant on its aesthetics and reputation, to entice the viewers.

The significance of visual here is notable, with the use of mechanisms such as icons, symbols and pictograms to form visual representations of ratings and reviews. This forms an immediate building of reputation and therefore develops trust. The designer can implement the availability of such icons but the use and uptake of these will largely depend on the users. Once established, the visual presentation creates a strong summary of the programmes based upon opinions and reviews of others establishing a level of conformity. This will determine the success or failure of programmes as users commonly go in search of the opinions of others before making a decision on what they will do or how they will react. After all, as discussed by Mooney and Rollins (2008), we "...go online to seek largely subjective perspectives from complete strangers."

Language is of least inportance in a system such as this, due to the heavy reliance on the visual, and the connection between visually assessed ratings, such as thumbs up, and reputation. Nevertheless it will always have a role to play when influence, persuasion and conformity are involved. However the language requires time to read and as discussed earlier the first impressions are the most important.

3 Design Model & Considerations

Amazon Review

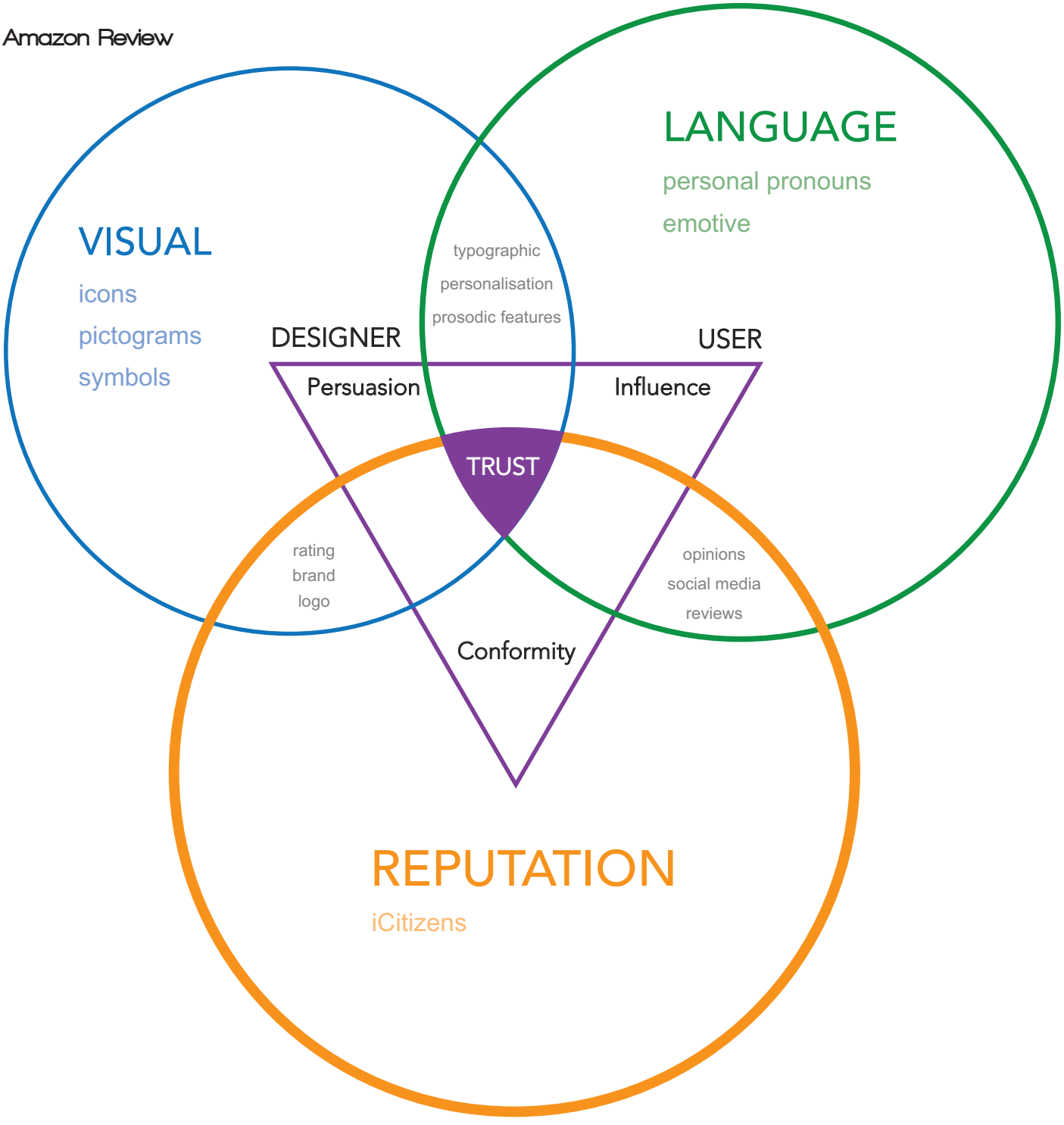


Figure 3.6a Design model for Amazon Review

3

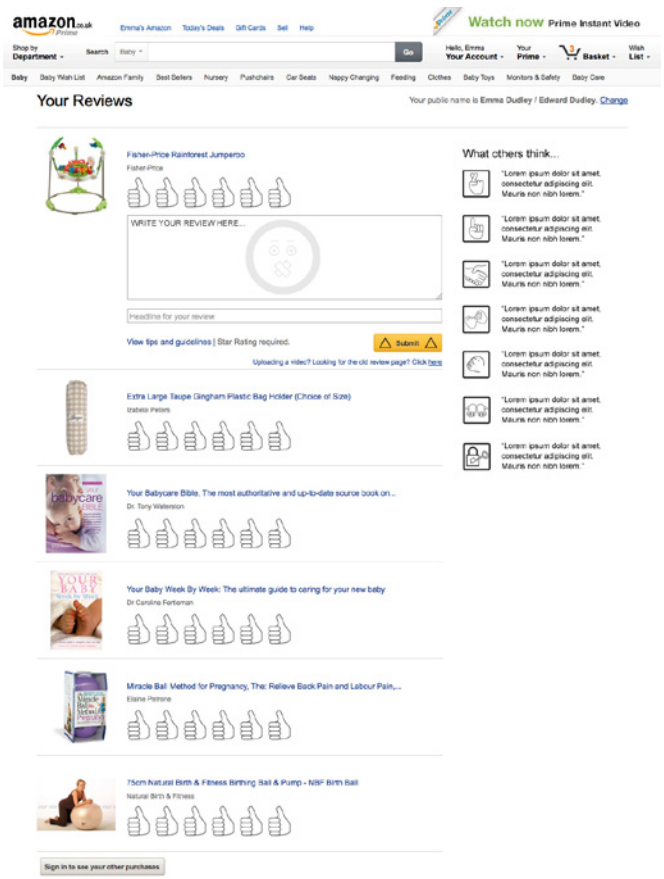


Figure 3.6b Amazon Review redesign

In such an established system it is the reputation that is of greatest value and it can be argued that regardless of the content, the brand's reputation immediately forms trust, as discussed by Barak (2008). He continues to look at eBay, one of the most successful reputation systems, in relation to its influential and persuasive performance and describes that "...that the feedback given did seem to predict the sellers' future success." This displays the strength a brand can have.

With this in mind and for the designer to take back as much control as this system will permit, it is recommended that the visual and language aspects are used to add to the trustworthiness. These will need to work independently and together in attempting to influence and persuade the user.

In light of this the users are beginning to control the brands by creating, sharing and influencing through socio-messaging. As shown in figure 3.6a, language should be treated with equal importance to the reputation the system holds and it is the designer's responsibility to implement typographic, personalised and prosodic features into the system to begin persuading and influencing the user to form trust. Sharing is a strong form of persuading and influencing as Mooney and Rollins (2008) rightly state, "...opinions have more legitamacy if we believe they're based on personal experience or the desire to help others," although they continue to explain that this form is better than the use of persuasion however both can work together to strengthen the formation of trust and speed up the trust building process.

3 Design Model & Considerations

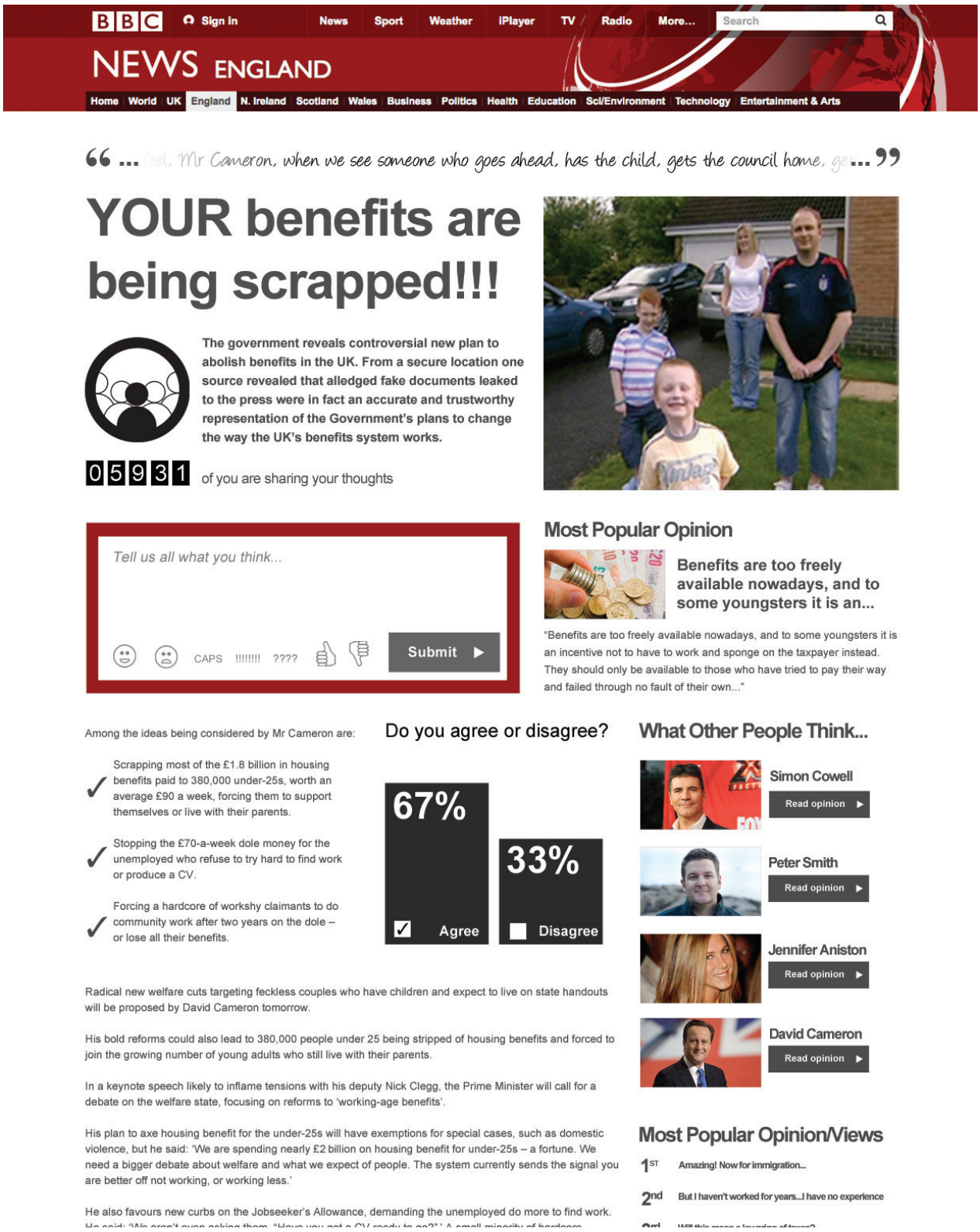


Figure 4.0 Design consideration using key mechanisms and cues

3

The final part of stage 3 looks at a re-design of the BBC New site following an ideally balanced model to create optimum trust in the user, through the mechanisms of influence, persuasion and conformity.

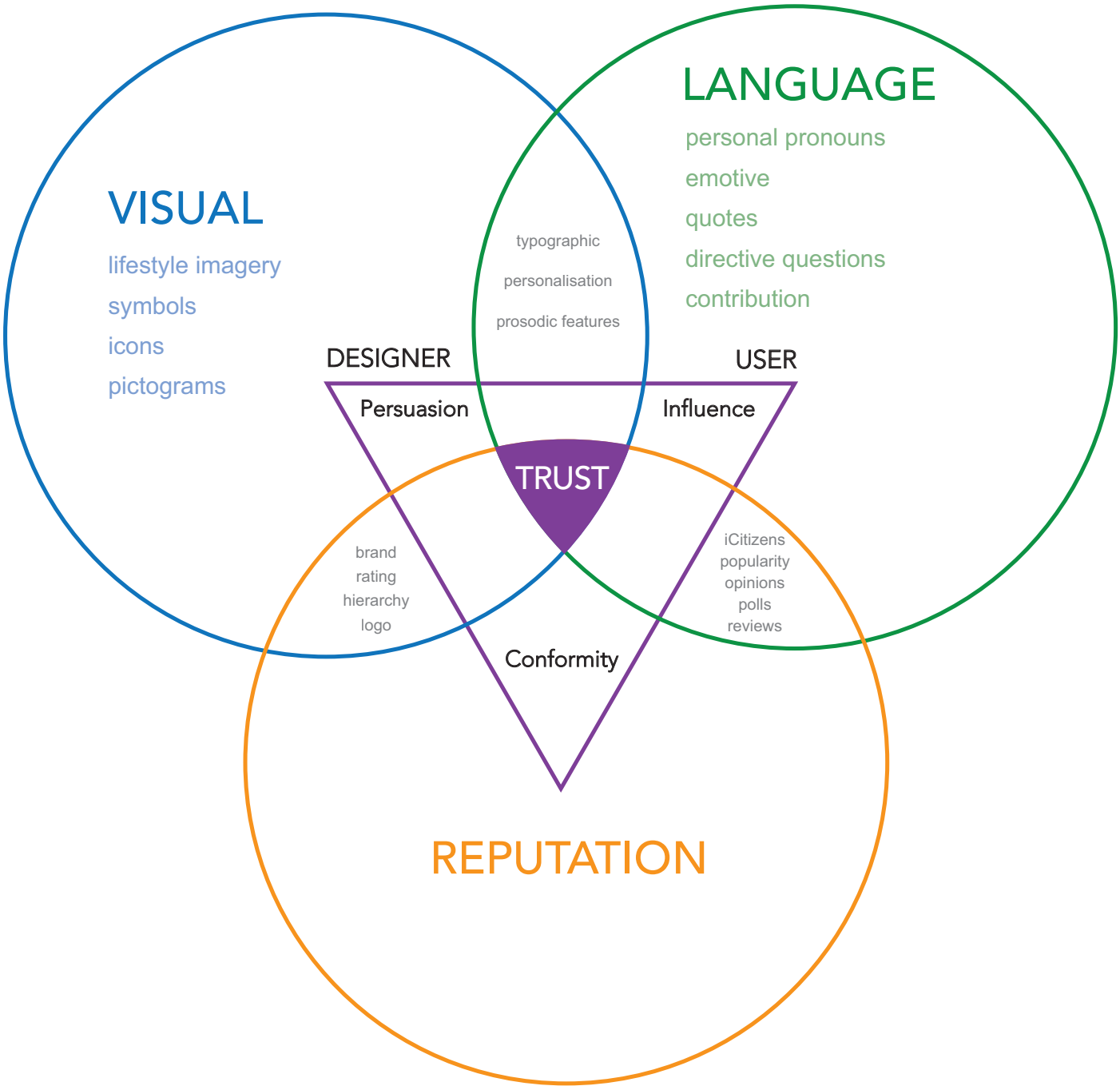


Figure 4.1 An ideal model using key mechanisms and cues

3 Design Model & Considerations

To devise the final part of this study a design consideration (figure 4.0) and model (figure 4.1) have been established. This concludes the question set out at the beginning; 'what forms the relationship of trust between anonymous individuals or groups that enables influence and persuasion online?'

Understanding and identifying the audience in a particular subject matter is extremely important in such a design task. This will support the mechanisms used to influence users online, and connect with what they see and experience.

The key mechanisms and cues needed to achieve optimum levels of trust have been applied to the model to create the design. What is important in such a model is to achieve the right balance of visual, language and reputation elements for the system being designed. As with the BBC News site, an article which would encourage a great level of debate and forming of opinions would benefit from a balanced level of all three elements.

When approaching a design that will create a reaction of some degree from those who interact with it, it is important to consider the layout of the mechanisms and cues used. Hall (2007) discusses that what is seen first is easier to remember and as a result has more impact on our thinking. In light of this it is important to present the key mechanisms immediately. Supplementary to this he also considers the relationship between the position of objects, images and text in museums, defined as framing; all are displayed to create an impression from the onlooker. This should be considered online by the designer to maintain interest and develop the desired response.

As shown in figure 4.0a and discussed earlier in this report displaying a short snappy headline provides linguistic cues immediately.

YOUR benefits are being scrapped!!!

Figure 4.0a Snappy Headings

As investigated by Galegher et al (1998), emphasis by use of prosodic features such as capital letters and exclamation marks expresses the message strongly from the offset providing the confidence the reader requires to begin establishing trust.

A lifestyle image sits alongside this to represent the average family. This can be seen in figure 4.0b. As discussed by Borchers (2005, 2002) images represent reality that the audience can relate to. The use of these can serve as proof to the reader, as they proceed in building their trust levels on what they are being presented.



Figure 4.0b Lifestyle Imagery

This is followed by a visual cue of a symbol which can be generative as discussed earlier and change dependent on other readers' contributions, allowing for dynamic content.



Figure 4.0c Uses of Iconography

The one used here in figure 4.0c, represents conformity and establishes a sense of belonging to the onlooker by being part of the group. This influences the user to follow others by contributing their opiniion. This is supported by a counter to monitor the number of users casting their opinions. A considerately placed submission field follows, for others to add their views (figure 4.0d). This will allow conformity to begin to take place.



Figure 4.0d Submission of Reviews

The ability for the public to contribute their views and exchange socio-messages allows for a sense of satisfaction, and achievement as they contribute to the opinion of others.

The ability to use icons displaying gestures such as in figure 4.0e are a quick easy way to express emotion. This establishes an immediate impression for the user to begin to form their own opinion, whilst being subconsciously influenced by the mechanisms.



Figure 4.0e Gesture Iconography

The inclusion of quotes in a handwritten style (figure 4.0f) can effect how we feel about what we read. This style ensures legitimacy in the content as the views are coming from personal experience and the readers are contributing to the opinions. To maintain the personal feeling the addition of personal pronouns allows the design to speak to the individual.

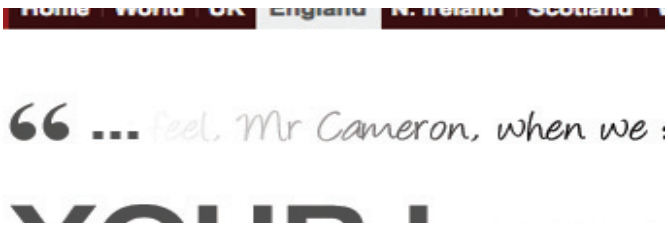


Figure 4.0f Handwritten quotes

3 Design Model & Considerations

The inclusion of iCitizens (figure 4.0g) - figures of authority and influence, can play a crucial role in the trust formed amongst users who see them as experts in the area the subject surrounds.

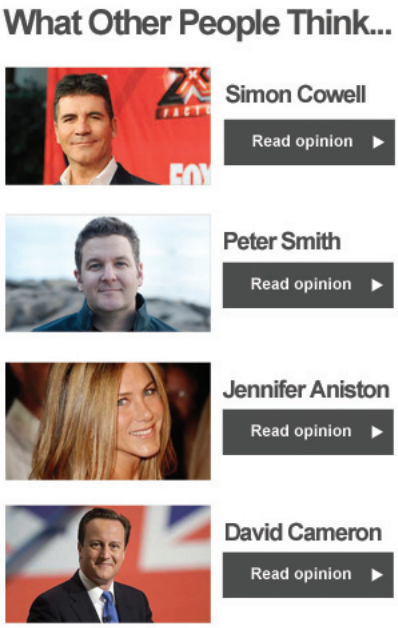


Figure 4.0g What Other People Think...

Placing systems of hierarchy (figure 4.0h), voting and polls (figure 4.0i) establishes acts of conformity as users are drawn towards the most popular of opinions and more likely to form similar views as they trust the majority.



Figure 4.0h System of hierachy

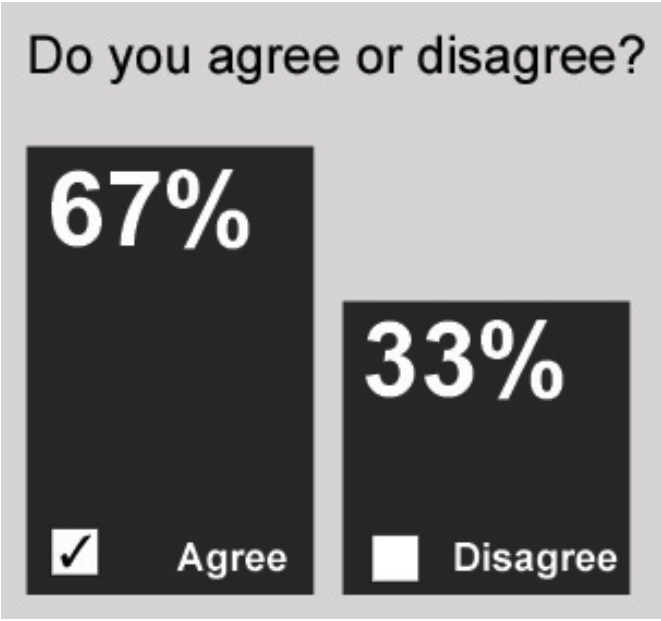


Figure 4.0i Voting & Polls

Implementing these mechanisms and cues on a balanced scale allows enough information and time for trust to be formed and influence and persuasion to take place.

To conclude it can be seen that with careful design using a balanced model, the designer can build trust in the online user. Once this trust is established the designer is free to manipulate the user to achieve the intended response through the use of mechanisms and cues from the model.

Following the completion of stage one, two and three, further development could potentially look at the models and templates progress into functioning sites. This will allow them to be reviewed and results collected to better understand where influence and persuasion come into play most for trust to be formed rapidly and with greatest effect.

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Figure 2.1. CR. A newspaper for the times

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Figure 4.0e Handwritten Quotes

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Appendix

Appendix 1.

Dudley, E. (2014) Advanced Design Project. Can designers influence the user to conform within the review and user relationship?

Appendix 1

Advanced Design Project. Can designers influence the user to conform within the review and user relationship?

Can designers influence the user to conform within the review and user relationship?

Introduction.

This study investigates the organization of content to share information on the web to encourage a desired response from the user using the review system provided to them.

Studies conducted by Solomon Asch (1907-1996) focused on order and understanding not from the situation but from how it is noticed through conformity and persuasion. He initially believed that we are largely independent in the decisions and choices we make however his studies soon proved otherwise, that we do in fact conform significantly to society which has a great influence on peoples' actions and opinions. It is with these findings that Asch's studies became so relevant to this study.

Susan Weinschenk (2009) discusses online ratings and reviews, "People look to others to decide what they should do" (p17). She continues to explain, "Online ratings and reviews influence us greatly – most powerfully at a non-conscious level" (p19). It is with this that defining the difference between influence and persuasion has played a key part in understanding conformity in this study. Understanding the relationship between the designer, user and the review system is crucial in determining how, when and where influence and persuasion play their parts. This allows the designer to think about how to influence and persuade those who interact on the web.

Influence makes others behave or do what is desired without the use of words. It works silently with little to no effort needed therefore this is the preferred method by professionals as it is trustworthy and credible. Persuasion however, changes a person's behavior deliberately and is a conscious approach, which can be seen as manipulative due to its ability to sway the opinions of others. This method is considered to be a temporary solution. As a result of persuasion and/or influence taking place conformity happens. Figure 1.1 illustrates these methods within the reviewing/rating process.

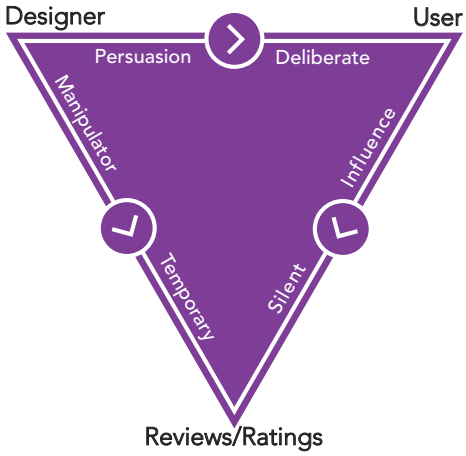


Figure 1.1. Persuasion and Influence process in the review/rating system

This diagram displays the process of the designer taking control by creating the system for the user to review and in doing so persuading, and therefore deliberately manipulating what the user will see and how the user will form their opinions. In doing so the user may be unaware of such designs and therefore they will be influenced silently to form a particular opinion by the way the designer has organised the content.

Another way to illustrate this process is seen in figure 1.2 below. This shows how a user can respond to the review system the designer sets using the tools of

influence and persuasion explained at the start of this investigation. The left graph shows the designer setting the level of conformity they wish to achieve and with the use of influence present, initially the conformity increases significantly however when persuasion comes in to play conformity levels flatten and begin to decrease as the trust and credibility gained through influence, is lost. The right diagram shows how influence and persuasion differ in their behaviour when they come in to play. As to be expected persuasion lasts for a notably shorter amount of time than influence, which continues to achieve a higher level of conformity and for a longer period of time.

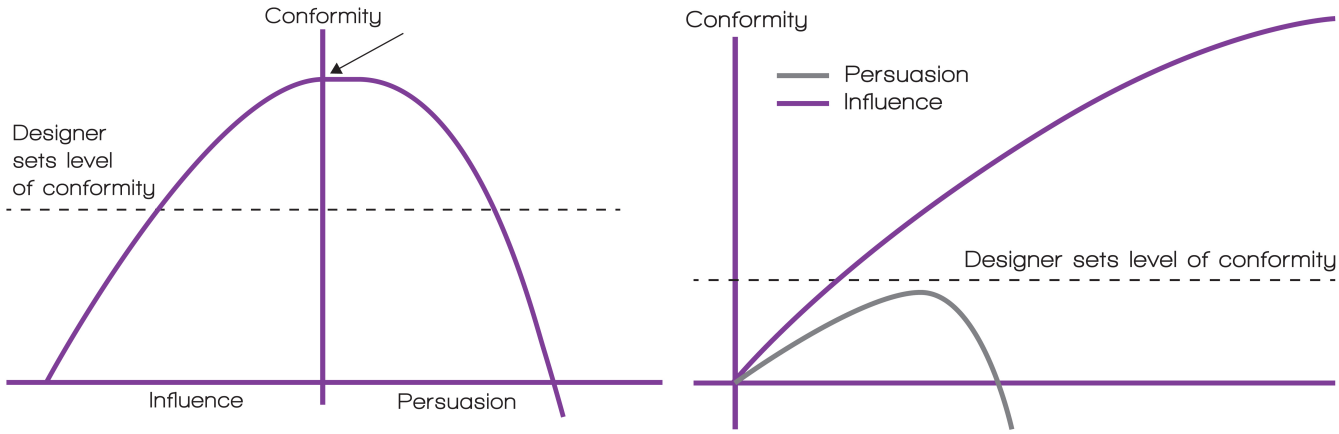


Figure 1.2

Understanding conformity and how it plays a part in online decisions is key to taking this study further. To understand it fully it is important to collect data on existing reviews systems to analyse and understand how they work and how they can be developed to give control to the designer rather than the user.

Data was collected from a diverse range of areas to initially allow for a broader coverage of the findings with a main focus on Amazon (2013-2014) due to their large review systems and breadth of categories. In addition results were gathered

from TripAdvisor (2013-2014) and Waterstones (2014) to include a variety of review systems in this analysis. Due to time limitation for this investigation the focus was on what the user would see when approaching a product containing reviews and what may have influential factors on the users' decisions.

10 reviews per item were collected for each category and of these 2 examples of each rating score. The categories included electrical, beauty, toys & games, movies, fashion, books and hotels. Areas of investigation included:

- Average number of words for each review.
- The use of punctuation in a repetitive form such as the use of exclamation marks and question marks.
- Friendly punctuation – kisses 'x' being used in the reviews.
- The use of positive emoticons such as :) :-) ;) ;-) :D :-D
- The use of negative emoticons such as :(:-(
- The use of capitalised words within reviews.
- The use of persuasive/directive personalization. This is when the reviewer uses the word 'you' or 'you're' etc. directly as though they are speaking and referring to the user/onlooker.

From these areas, six key questions were considered whilst conducting the data analysis. The main focus for this study is to be on the average rating that is being given for the item and the correlation that has with the system being used to portray the thoughts and opinions.

To conduct the data analysis the analytical tool SPSS was used. This allowed for a concise comparison of groups and to see if any of the results were of any statistical significance. A regression test measures the relationship with a R^2 correlation function. For the R^2 to be considered to have some statistical significance a value of 0.6 or higher needs to be seen indicating the 60% of the variation in average can be explained by the other parameter, in this case the system being used to portray the thoughts and opinions. 60% can be considered a firm relationship that can be considered in terms of prediction.

In addition the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is used to show if there is a better prediction of the dependent variable, that is the system or method being used within the review. If the significance (sig) is less than 0.05, means there is a 95% chance that the relationship between a particular rating and the method is not by chance and therefore a prediction can be made.

To represent the findings of each question the most appropriate graph, the line graph, is used to see patterns as the rating scale changes from 1 star to 5 stars.

Analysis.

Question 1: Is there a relationship between the number of words and the review, being given?

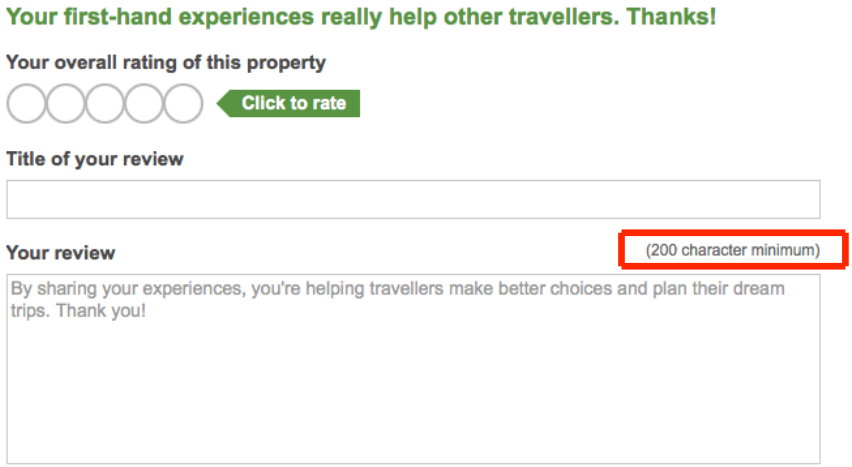


Figure 2.0. An example of the use of minimum word count

Figure 2.1 shows that in most categories R^2 is less than 0.06, meaning that the independent variable - the average rating scored, explains for less than 6% of the variability of the dependent variable - the average number of words used in the review. Although not of significant difference movies and electricals show a greater result for R^2 with electrical equating to 0.3 or 30% and movies 0.17 or 17%, which is a greater difference to the others. Further investigation would be needed to discover if these subjects have a tendency to have an increased word count, due to being more complex items, when users write their reviews.

Model Summary

Categories	Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Beauty	1	.162[a]	.026	-.071	22.6259
Books	1	.161[a]	.026	-.072	40.6044
Electrical	1	.555[a]	.308	.221	79.7319
Fashion	1	.105[a]	.011	-.088	10.8285
Movies	1	.415[a]	.172	.090	94.9699
ToysGames	1	.029[a]	.001	-.099	23.6873
Tripadvisor	1	.240[a]	.058	-.037	20.2968

a. Predictors: (Constant), AvRating

Figure 2.1. Model Summary for Average Number of Words

The ANOVA table, shown in figure 2.2, display results with no statistical significance however as to be expected electricals came closest with a result of 0.096, which relates to the results that came from the model summary in figure 2.1.

ANOVA[a]

Categories	Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Beauty	1	Regression	137.461	1	137.461	.269	.616[b]
		Residual	5119.328	10	511.933		
		Total	5256.789	11			
Books	1	Regression	437.622	1	437.622	.265	.618[b]
		Residual	16487.185	10	1648.718		
		Total	16924.807	11			
Electrical	1	Regression	22594.601	1	22594.601	3.554	.096[b]
		Residual	50857.400	8	6357.175		
		Total	73452.001	9			
Fashion	1	Regression	13.122	1	13.122	.112	.745[b]
		Residual	1172.565	10	117.256		
		Total	1185.687	11			
Movies	1	Regression	18775.545	1	18775.545	2.082	.180[b]
		Residual	90192.821	10	9019.282		
		Total	108968.367	11			
ToysGames	1	Regression	4.593	1	4.593	.008	.930[b]
		Residual	5610.897	10	561.090		
		Total	5615.490	11			
Tripadvisor	1	Regression	251.859	1	251.859	.611	.452[b]
		Residual	4119.597	10	411.960		
		Total	4371.457	11			

a. Dependent Variable: AvNumberWords
b. Predictors: (Constant), AvRating

Figure 2.2. ANOVA table for average number of words

As illustrated in figure 2.3, the word count peaks at between 2 and 3 stars and again around 4 stars.

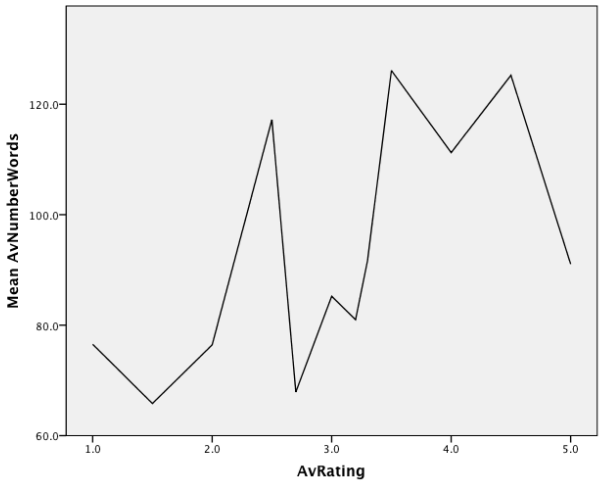


Figure 2.3

These results could be because users see no reason to write much if the item is extremely poor or they feel that the item meets all expectations therefore there is nothing more to say than to provide it with a top rating.

Question 2: Is there a correlation between the use of punctuation and the rating the review has been given?


12 of 12 people found the following review helpful
★☆☆☆☆ **pedispin a load of rubbish** 14 Oct 2013
By helen obrien
Amazon Verified Purchase
does not have enough power for the job, the minute you put pressure on the unit it stops, and thats the whole point of the sytem when trying to remove hard skin. looked at the t.v.advert, which is so misleading, and was impressed. don"t buy this !!!!!
Comment | **Was this review helpful to you?** Yes No

Figure 3.0. An example of the use of repetitive punctuation

Model Summary

Categories	Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Beauty	1	.229[a]	.053	-.042	5.8539
Books	1	.352[a]	.124	.036	2.1533
Electrical	1	.335[a]	.112	.001	2.5722
Fashion	1	.431[a]	.186	.105	3.9186
Movies	1	.109[a]	.012	-.087	7.3294
ToysGames	1	.202[a]	.041	-.055	7.8631
Tripadvisor	1	.388[a]	.151	.066	9.6681

a. Predictors: (Constant), AvRating

Figure 3.1. Model summary for punctuation

In figure 3.1 most categories give an R^2 less than 0.18 explaining for less than 18% of the variability of the dependent variable, the use of punctuation in the review. As shown in figure 3.2 the sig values are greater than 0.16, which is moving away from significant value of 0.05, which would create more interest in the results.

ANOVA[a]

Categories	Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Beauty	1	Regression	18.990	1	18.990	.554	.474[b]
		Residual	342.677	10	34.268		
		Total	361.667	11			
Books	1	Regression	6.548	1	6.548	1.412	.262[b]
		Residual	46.369	10	4.637		
		Total	52.917	11			
Electrical	1	Regression	6.669	1	6.669	1.008	.345[b]
		Residual	52.931	8	6.616		
		Total	59.600	9			
Fashion	1	Regression	35.113	1	35.113	2.287	.161[b]
		Residual	153.554	10	15.355		
		Total	188.667	11			
Movies	1	Regression	6.470	1	6.470	.120	.736[b]
		Residual	537.197	10	53.720		
		Total	543.667	11			
ToysGames	1	Regression	26.384	1	26.384	.427	.528[b]
		Residual	618.283	10	61.828		
		Total	644.667	11			
Tripadvisor	1	Regression	165.939	1	165.939	1.775	.212[b]
		Residual	934.727	10	93.473		
		Total	1100.667	11			

a. Dependent Variable: Punctuation
b. Predictors: (Constant), AvRating

Figure 3.2. ANOVA table for punctuation

Figure 3.3 shows how punctuation is used heavily for lower rating scores and sharply declines around the average rating scores, then begins to increase as the ratings increase.

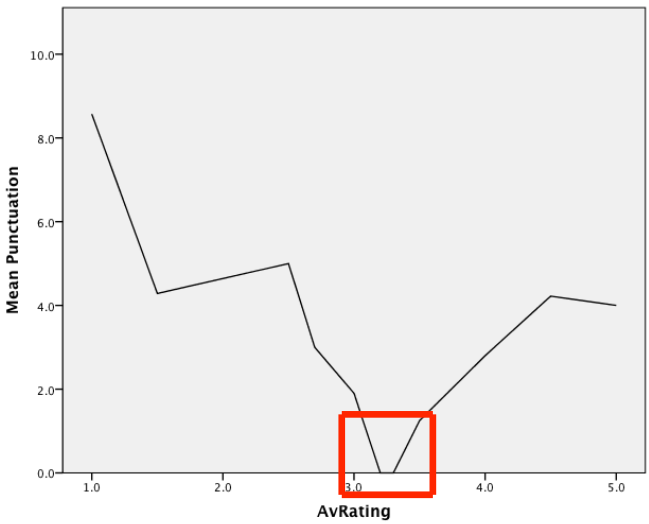


Figure 3.3

These results would suggest that with extreme opinions being had at each end of the scale, those wishing to express themselves in a more vocal use punctuation to illustrate and exaggerate their point.

Question 3: Is there a correlation between the uses of friendly punctuation and the rating the review has been given?


5 of 6 people found the following review helpful

☆☆☆☆☆ **Nice** 25 Jun 2012

By Saira

Amazon Verified Purchase

Very nice i have just receved mine today and tried it on my daughter as she has to many blackheads , and was amzed it workd very well and very fast deliver xx

Comment | **Was this review helpful to you?** Yes No

Figure 4.0. Example of the use of friendly punctuation

Model Summary

Categories	Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Beauty	1	.202[a]	.041	-.055	1.0234
Electrical	1	.384[a]	.147	.041	.3097
Tripadvisor	1	.455[a]	.207	.127	.5394

a. Predictors: (Constant), AvRating

Figure 4.1. Model summary for friendly punctuation

A much smaller table is shown in 4.1 due to friendly punctuation featuring only within beauty, electrical categories and on TripAdvisor. The results here show R^2 less than 0.207, which is less than 21% of the variability of the dependent variable – the use of friendly punctuation in reviews. To reflect this the ANOVA table featured in figure 4.2 shows the sig value being greater than 0.13 again moving further away from results of any significance.

ANOVA[a]

Categories	Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Beauty	1	Regression	.444	1	.444	.424	.530[b]
		Residual	10.473	10	1.047		
		Total	10.917	11			
Electrical	1	Regression	.133	1	.133	1.383	.273[b]
		Residual	.767	8	.096		
		Total	.900	9			
Tripadvisor	1	Regression	.758	1	.758	2.604	.138[b]
		Residual	2.909	10	.291		
		Total	3.667	11			

a. Dependent Variable: FriendlyPunctuation

b. Predictors: (Constant), AvRating

Figure 4.2. ANOVA table for friendly punctuation

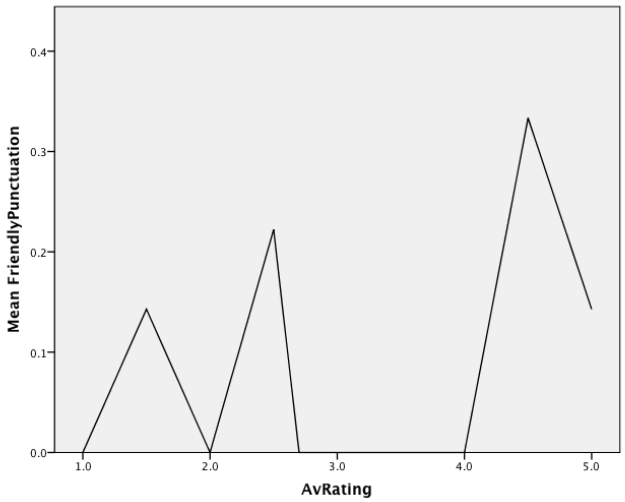
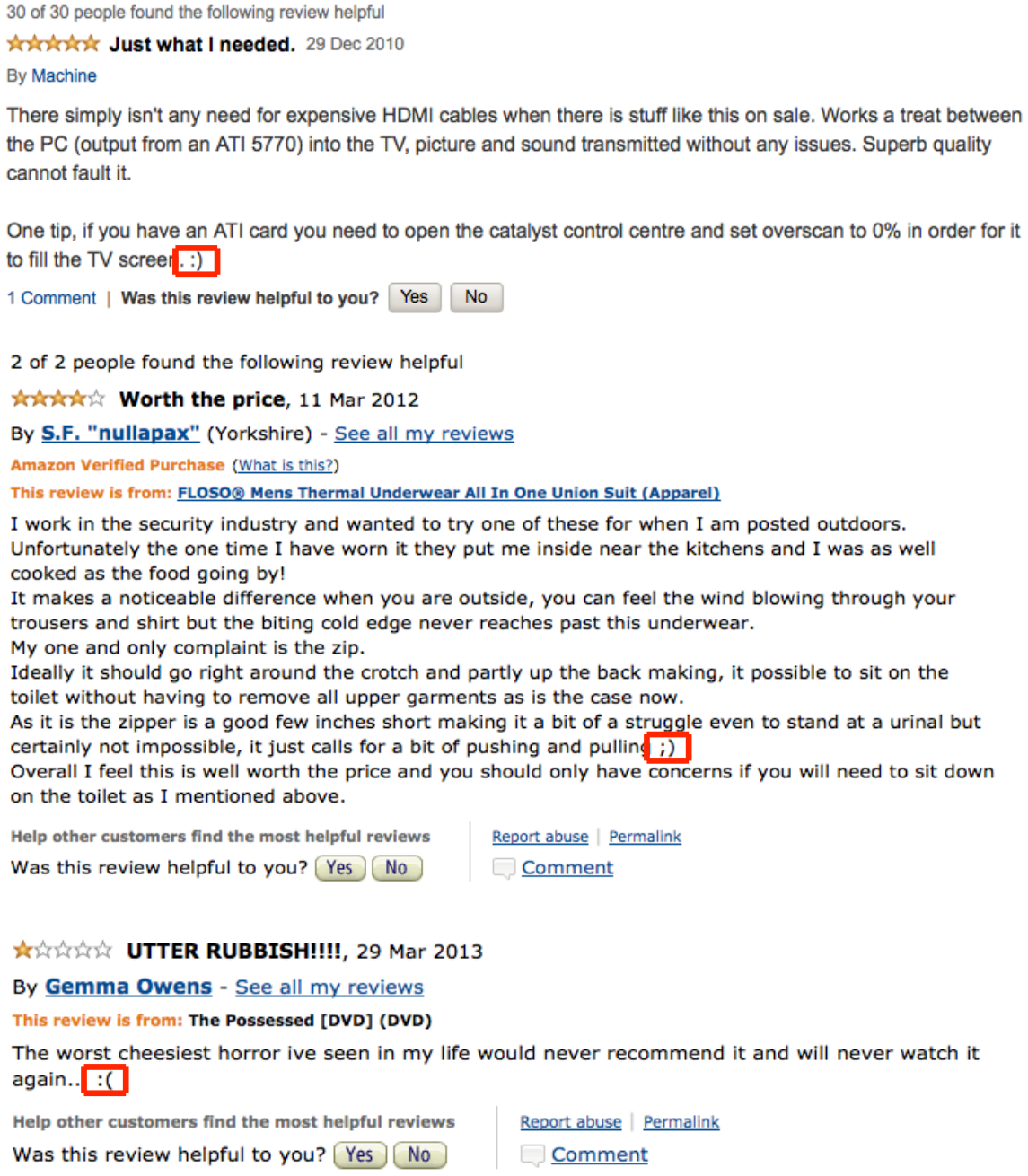


Figure 4.3

Figure 4.3 show the presence of the friendly punctuation fluctuating quite significantly throughout making it difficult to draw a conclusion. However in line with other results, a drop is seen for average rating scores, which indicates the reluctance in a response at these points in the review system.

Question 4: Is there a correlation between the use of positive and negative emoticons and the rating the review have received?

Throughout the data collection it became clear users were adopting methods used from other sources to express their feelings through review systems and with emoticons being used across many channels in today's society, it comes as no surprise that emoticons appeared frequently.



30 of 30 people found the following review helpful

★★★★★ **Just what I needed.** 29 Dec 2010

By Machine

There simply isn't any need for expensive HDMI cables when there is stuff like this on sale. Works a treat between the PC (output from an ATI 5770) into the TV, picture and sound transmitted without any issues. Superb quality cannot fault it.

One tip, if you have an ATI card you need to open the catalyst control centre and set overscan to 0% in order for it to fill the TV screen :)

1 Comment | **Was this review helpful to you?** Yes No

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful

★★★★☆ **Worth the price**, 11 Mar 2012

By **S.F. "nullapax"** (Yorkshire) - See all my reviews

Amazon Verified Purchase (What is this?)

This review is from: FLOSO® Mens Thermal Underwear All In One Union Suit (Apparel)

I work in the security industry and wanted to try one of these for when I am posted outdoors.
Unfortunately the one time I have worn it they put me inside near the kitchens and I was as well cooked as the food going by!
It makes a noticeable difference when you are outside, you can feel the wind blowing through your trousers and shirt but the biting cold edge never reaches past this underwear.
My one and only complaint is the zip.
Ideally it should go right around the crotch and partly up the back making, it possible to sit on the toilet without having to remove all upper garments as is the case now.
As it is the zipper is a good few inches short making it a bit of a struggle even to stand at a urinal but certainly not impossible, it just calls for a bit of pushing and pulling ;)
Overall I feel this is well worth the price and you should only have concerns if you will need to sit down on the toilet as I mentioned above.

Help other customers find the most helpful reviews Report abuse | Permalink

Was this review helpful to you? Yes No Comment

★☆☆☆☆ **UTTER RUBBISH!!!!**, 29 Mar 2013

By **Gemma Owens** - See all my reviews

This review is from: The Possessed [DVD] (DVD)

The worst cheesiest horror ive seen in my life would never recommend it and will never watch it again.. :(

Help other customers find the most helpful reviews Report abuse | Permalink

Was this review helpful to you? Yes No Comment

Figure 5.0. An example of the use of emoticons

Model Summary

Categories	Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Books	1	.110[a]	.012	-.087	.3009
Electrical	1	.655[a]	.429	.358	.7600
Fashion	1	.234[a]	.055	-.040	.5888
Movies	1	.562[a]	.316	.248	.5392
ToysGames	1	.709[a]	.502	.453	.3643
Tripadvisor	1	.234[a]	.055	-.040	.6876

a. Predictors: (Constant), AvRating

Figure 5.1a. Model summary for positive emoticons

Model Summary

Categories	Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Books	1	.110[a]	.012	-.087	.3009
Fashion	1	.298[a]	.089	-.002	.4528
Movies	1	.384[a]	.147	.062	.2796

a. Predictors: (Constant), AvRating

Figure 5.1b. Model summary for negative emoticons

Although the results for emoticons indicated no significant difference between the dependent variable emoticons and the rating being given, the results for positive emoticon displayed in figure 5.1a, showed noteworthy figures with half of the categories displaying results for R^2 at more than 0.31 or 31% of the variability of the dependent variable – the use of positive emoticons in the review. And to draw on specific categories, electrical results came back at 0.429 (43%) and toys and games resulting in 0.502 (50%). These areas are worth investigating further.

The results for negative emoticons did not show a significant value. This may be due to only featuring in three categories; books, fashion and movies.

ANOVA[a]

Categories	Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Books	1	Regression	.011	1	.011	.122	.734[b]
		Residual	.906	10	.091		
		Total	.917	11			
Electrical	1	Regression	3.479	1	3.479	6.022	.040[b]
		Residual	4.621	8	.578		
		Total	8.100	9			
Fashion	1	Regression	.200	1	.200	.577	.465[b]
		Residual	3.467	10	.347		
		Total	3.667	11			
Movies	1	Regression	1.343	1	1.343	4.618	.057[b]
		Residual	2.907	10	.291		
		Total	4.250	11			
ToysGames	1	Regression	1.340	1	1.340	10.099	.010[b]
		Residual	1.327	10	.133		
		Total	2.667	11			
Tripadvisor	1	Regression	.273	1	.273	.577	.465[b]
		Residual	4.727	10	.473		
		Total	5.000	11			

a. Dependent Variable: PositiveEmoticons
b. Predictors: (Constant), AvRating

Figure 5.2a. ANOVA table for positive emoticons

ANOVA[a]

Categories	Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Books	1	Regression	.011	1	.011	.122	.734[b]
		Residual	.906	10	.091		
		Total	.917	11			
Fashion	1	Regression	.200	1	.200	.976	.347[b]
		Residual	2.050	10	.205		
		Total	2.250	11			
Movies	1	Regression	.135	1	.135	1.727	.218[b]
		Residual	.782	10	.078		
		Total	.917	11			

a. Dependent Variable: NegativeEmoticons

b. Predictors: (Constant), AvRating

Figure 5.2b. ANOVA table for negative emoticons

As to be expected the ANOVA table for positive emoticons, reflect the results shown in the Model Summary with the sig value for movies being on the required value at 0.057. But more importantly the results for electrical and toys and games are less than or equal to 0.040 making them even more significant in this test. As mentioned previously the results for negative emoticons are not as notable.

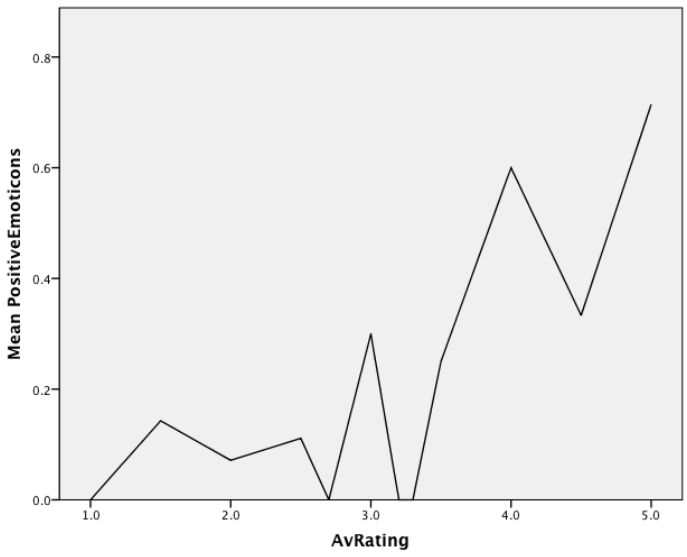


Figure 5.3a

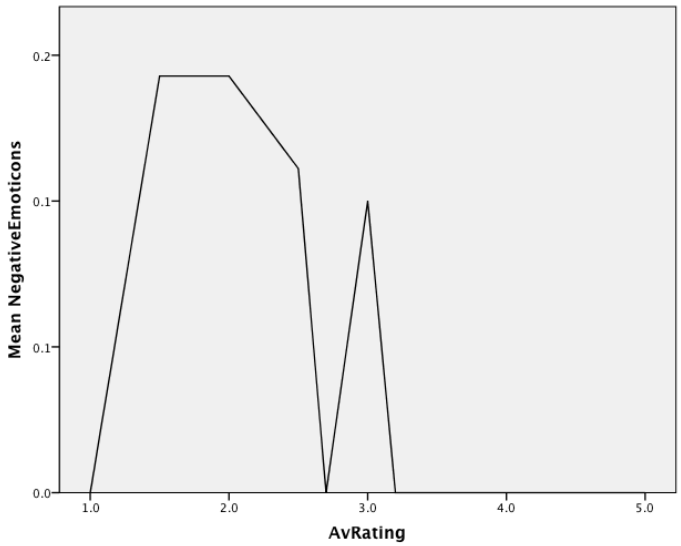


Figure 5.3b

Both graphs here show a pattern that would be expected with the use of emoticons being high at the most relevant points of the rating scale and decreasing towards the opposite end.

Question 5: Is there a correlation between the use of capitalised words and the rating being given?

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful

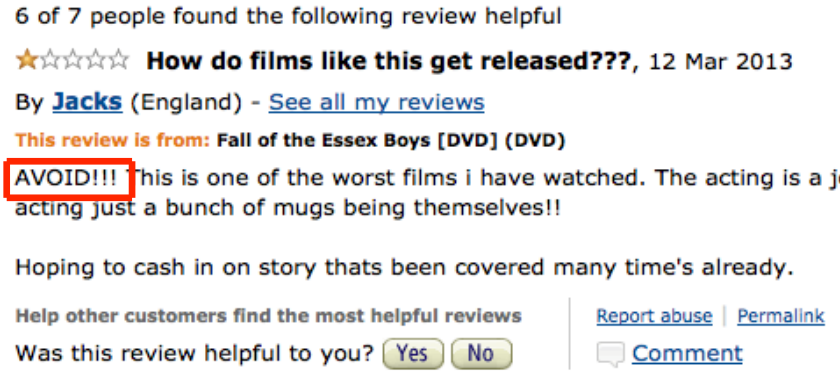
☆☆☆☆☆ **Exciting, nail biting fun!** 5 Feb 2012

By Venus

Durability: ☆☆☆☆☆ **Educational:** ☆☆☆☆☆ **Fun:** ☆☆☆☆☆

All our family absolutely LOVE this game and believe it or not, it actually gets you on edge, even though you only stand to lose wads of cardboard not money. The only downside is that it costs quite a bit and the majority of it is made from thick card, however, when it has been played as many times as we have it starts to look a bit frayed around the edges. They could do with moulding it in plastic and making it electronic as it is a bit over priced. BUT it has provided HOURS of fun and the questions actually sharpen up your knowledge!

Comment | **Was this review helpful to you?** Yes No


6 of 7 people found the following review helpful

★☆☆☆☆ **How do films like this get released???**, 12 Mar 2013

By **Jacks** (England) - See all my reviews

This review is from: Fall of the Essex Boys [DVD] (DVD)

AVOID!!! This is one of the worst films i have watched. The acting is a joke, i don't think it's even acting just a bunch of mugs being themselves!!

Hoping to cash in on story thats been covered many time's already.

Help other customers find the most helpful reviews | Report abuse | Permalink

Was this review helpful to you? Yes No | Comment

Figure 6.0. An example of the use of capitalised words

Model Summary

Categories	Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Beauty	1	.332[a]	.110	.021	6.7518
Books	1	.185[a]	.034	-.062	2.0672
Electrical	1	.132[a]	.017	-.105	1.2587
Fashion	1	.331[a]	.110	.021	13.6923
Movies	1	.029[a]	.001	-.099	61.9258
ToysGames	1	.224[a]	.050	-.045	9.2711
Tripadvisor	1	.619[a]	.383	.314	2.2168

a. Predictors: (Constant), AvRating

Figure 6.1. Model summary for capitalised words

As displayed in the model summary (figure 6.1) most categories R^2 results are less than 0.110 showing no significant pattern. However the results from TripAdvisor display a greater value at 0.383, possibly indicating a style of language being adopted for a specific subject area. The ANOVA table shown in figure 6.2 display results for TripAdvisor of 0.042 indicating that there is more than 95% chance that there is a relationship between the rating and the use of capitalised words therefore it could be predicted that reviewers will naturally use this method to emphasise and convey their emotions through very good or bad reviews.

ANOVA[a]

Categories	Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Beauty	1	Regression	56.384	1	56.384	1.23	.292[b]
		Residual	455.866	10	45.587		
		Total	512.250	11			
Books	1	Regression	1.519	1	1.519	.35	.564[b]
		Residual	42.731	10	4.273		
		Total	44.250	11			
Electrical	1	Regression	.225	1	.225	.14	.716[b]
		Residual	12.675	8	1.584		
		Total	12.900	9			
Fashion	1	Regression	231.200	1	231.200	1.23	.293[b]
		Residual	1874.800	10	187.480		
		Total	2106.000	11			
Movies	1	Regression	32.915	1	32.915	.00	.928[b]
		Residual	38348.002	10	3834.800		
		Total	38380.917	11			
ToysGames	1	Regression	45.390	1	45.390	.52	.484[b]
		Residual	859.527	10	85.953		
		Total	904.917	11			
Tripadvisor	1	Regression	27.408	1	27.408	5.57	.042[b]
		Residual	44.228	9	4.914		
		Total	71.636	10			

a. Dependent Variable: CapitalWords
b. Predictors: (Constant), AvRating

Figure 6.2. ANOVA table for capitalised words

To illustrate these findings, figure 6.3 displays the increased use of capitalised words at both extreme ends of the rating scale, which may explain the significance that has been found in the ANOVA table.

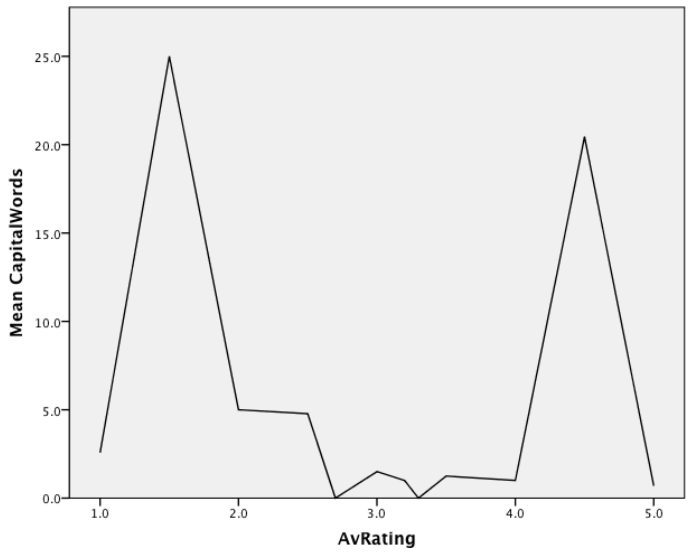


Figure 6.3

Question 6: Is there a correlation between the use of persuasive personalisation and the rating the review has been given?

What became apparent in the data collection was the use of 'you', 'your', 'you're' and so on. This gives the impression of directive/persuasive personalisation using words personal to the onlooker to persuade them to feel a particular way about the item. Examples such as, "…leaves *you* disappointed *you* wasted *your* time watching it" and "…don't waste *your* money…"



Figure 7.0. An example of the use of directive/persuasive personalization

Model Summary

Categories	Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Beauty	1	.172[a]	.030	-.067	3.5245
Books	1	.513[a]	.263	.190	5.9502
Electrical	1	.717[a]	.515	.454	7.4306
Fashion	1	.356[a]	.127	.039	9.3777
Movies	1	.697[a]	.485	.428	8.4775
ToysGames	1	.179[a]	.032	-.065	4.6422
Tripadvisor	1	.059[a]	.003	-.096	7.6435

a. Predictors: (Constant), AvRating

Figure 7.1. Model summary for persuasive personalization

Figure 7.1 displays how most of the results show that less than 26% explains for the use of persuasive/directive personalization with the rating given in the review. However of those results remaining electricals R^2 value is 0.515, which is statistically significantly showing that there is a firm relationship between the two components - the use of personalisation and rating score, indicating that a prediction can be made. To reaffirm this the ANOVA table featuring in figure 7.2 shows the sig value to be 0.020 confirming that this relationship between use of personalisation and the review rating, is not by chance and in fact based on these results a prediction can be made. In addition, although the results for the Model Summary for movies were not quite so significant the ANOVA table does show another area of significance with the value of 0.17 indicating that a prediction could also possibly be made here.

ANOVA[a]

Categories	Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Beauty	1	Regression	3.782	1	3.782	.304	.593[b]
		Residual	124.218	10	12.422		
		Total	128.000	11			
Books	1	Regression	126.613	1	126.613	3.576	.088[b]
		Residual	354.054	10	35.405		
		Total	480.667	11			
Electrical	1	Regression	468.395	1	468.395	8.483	.020[b]
		Residual	441.705	8	55.213		
		Total	910.100	9			
Fashion	1	Regression	127.513	1	127.513	1.450	.256[b]
		Residual	879.404	10	87.940		
		Total	1006.917	11			
Movies	1	Regression	610.093	1	610.093	8.489	.017[b]
		Residual	646.816	9	71.868		
		Total	1256.909	10			
ToysGames	1	Regression	7.165	1	7.165	.332	.577[b]
		Residual	215.501	10	21.550		
		Total	222.667	11			
Tripadvisor	1	Regression	2.021	1	2.021	.035	.856[b]
		Residual	584.229	10	58.423		
		Total	586.250	11			

a. Dependent Variable: PersuasivePersonalisation
b. Predictors: (Constant), AvRating

Figure 7.2. ANOVA table for persuasive personalisation

To illustrate these results figure 7.3 displays the patterns across the rating scores given. This shows a consistent use of persuasive personalisation on lower rating that then dips, as shown with other tests, around the average rating score. The use then rapidly peaks before returning to a consistent pattern again.

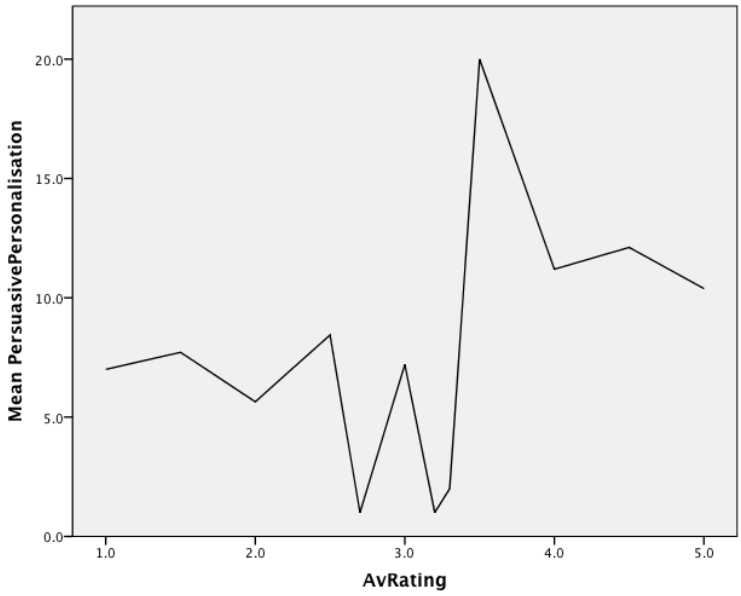


Figure 7.3

Although the focus for this study was to be on the average rating and the method used, upon the data analysis it was also found that within the categories electricals and movies the average number of words used and the use of persuasive/directive personalization held some significant results, and this began to show within the results in this study. Therefore it would be fair to briefly mention this as this may, in future, hold some bearing on further studies.

Conclusion.

Based on these results, designs rules can now begin to be considered if a new system was to be created by the designer. The results to the 6 key questions show that the style and the detail of reviews can be intrinsically linked to the rating score. Using the methods found in the data collection and analysis within the review system the designer can manipulate how the user responds, therefore giving them control over influencing and persuading the reviewer.

One possible rule could be to control the amount of words permitted per review dependent on the rating score. This could have an impact on how the reviewer responds, and whether they adopt other methods to express themselves if they are restricted to how much they can say.

Another method could be to provide tools in the review system such as emoticons, capitalised words or punctuation and see if the uptake of these increase and possibly result in a change of tone in reviews being submitted. However taking them away at times when they are most likely to be used could display some interesting results also.



Figure 8.1

Alternatively, review systems could allow for more friendly responses to provide a softer form of expression and taking away the use of harsher forms such like capitalised words and negative emoticons. This could change how users respond or could cause them to find other appropriate methods of expression.

Making the experience more personable by implementing the use of 'you' or 'your', invites the user to document their honest experience, and can allow the user to respond in a more personal fashion giving them the feeing of ownership of review they are placing. The results conducted in the study indicate that this method is being adopted by users to influence actions of others so to take back control as a designer this method needs to be implemented in to the system prior to the review being entered.

It would also be interesting to investigate another form of icon to rate with, currently stars are the most popular method however, these could be replaced with emoticons, or thumbs up.

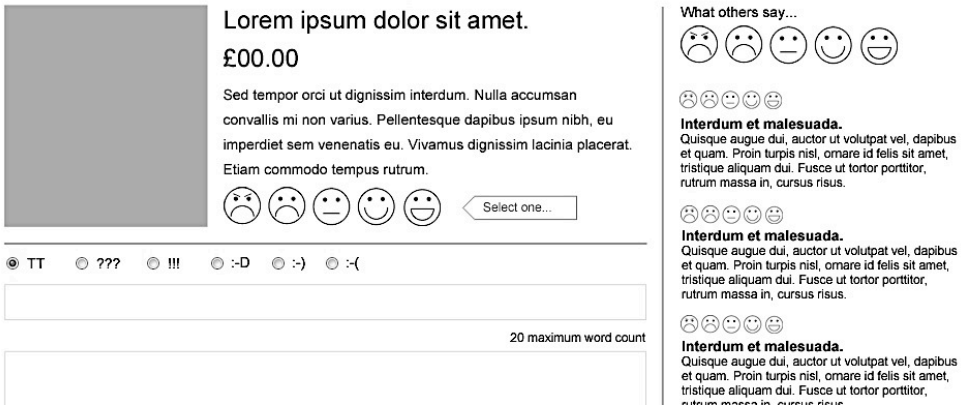


Figure 8.2

As also seen in the results there is a clear reluctance for expressing oneself when the rating score is average. With this in mind it is important to evaluate other methods such as a minimum word count that can encourage more of a response from the user. However as shown in the results, users have a reluctance in spending too much time on reviews if they do not feel strongly about it, therefore other forms of influence and persuasion will need to be in place.

The main areas of interest evolving from this study show that the way we communicate online is becoming a more visual process, so the systems that require interactions should adopt this style more and allow this form of expression. These systems should provide new tools and ways to express their opinions instead of just language, allowing for a more personal, honest experience. As shown in figure 8.3 I have begun considering how Amazon can adjust their review system to influence and persuade.

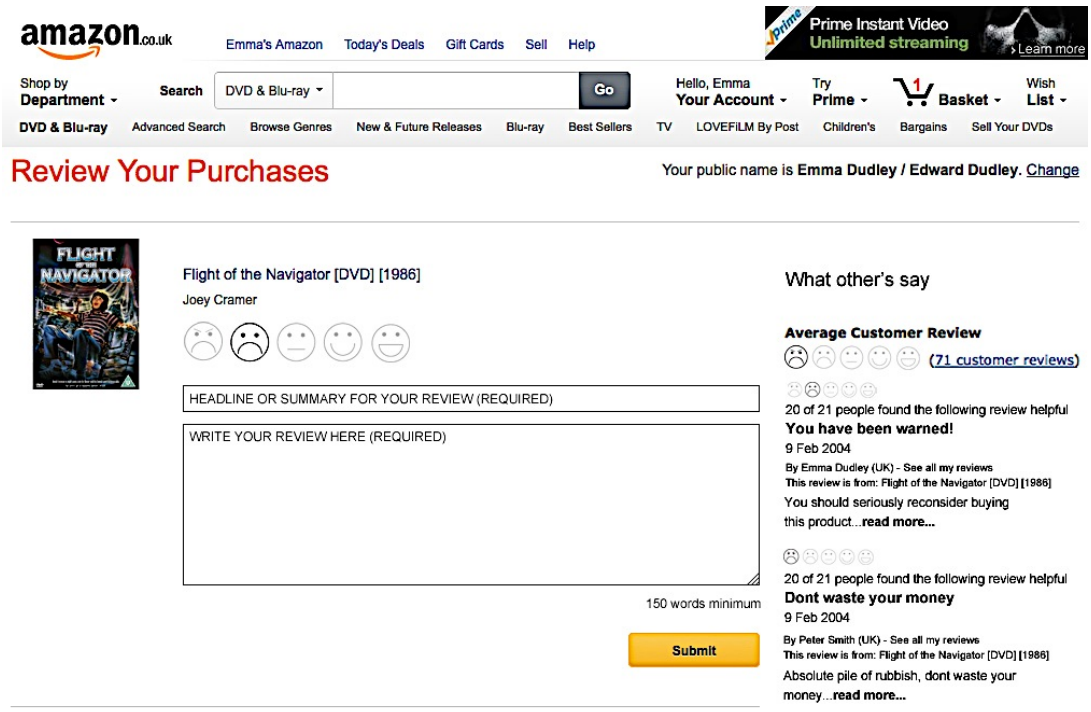


Figure 8.3

Although the main focus for this study was to be on the average rating being given for the item and the correlation that has with the system being used to portray the thoughts and opinions, it has opened up opportunities for further investigation due to so many components in review systems influencing and persuading the user. Other areas to consider would be influence and persuasion of peers within the review system and the concept of 'was this review useful to you…' currently used.

One final aspect to point out, whilst collecting data from the various sources, a couple of statements from reviews stood out to me, "could only give 5 stars as they're aren't anymore…" (2014) and "I WISH I COULD GIVE 0 STARS" (2012). This has raised an interesting question to the reasons why the systems provided only allow five stars ratings and not three or ten - another area worth investigating.

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Figure 8.1, 8.2, 8.3.

Suggested design solutions