

# Chapter 11

## User Engagement in Feedback Sharing through Social Influence

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### ABSTRACT

*Organizations continuously strive to engage customers in the services development process. The Social Web facilitates this process by enabling novel channels for voluntary feedback sharing through social media and technologically advanced environments. This chapter explores how social influence design principles can enhance the effectiveness of socio-technical systems designed to alter human behavior with respect to sharing feedback. Drawing upon social science theories, this chapter develops a research framework that identifies social influence design principles pertinent to persuasive systems that facilitate user engagement in feedback sharing. The design principles are then implemented in an information system and their effects on feedback sharing are explored in an experimental setting. The main findings of this chapter contribute to research related to social influences on user behavior and to the practice of designing persuasive information systems.*

### INTRODUCTION

The rapid evolution of information and communication technologies and the emergence of the social web are continuously reshaping how businesses engage customers. Ever-growing connectivity not only provides new methods for organizations to retain existing customer relationships, but also enables novel approaches to

providing rich customer engagement experiences (Payne et al., 2008). At the same time, customers are steadily developing an understanding of the spectrum of opportunities provided by emerging technologies. They acquire new habits of interaction and consumption, which then determine their expectations about how services are designed (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2003; Schlager et al., 2013). Customers increasingly demand products

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and services that match their needs and preferences (Moeller et al., 2013). Therefore, businesses seek opportunities to understand their customers' expectations (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). In other words, organizations need to reach their customers proactively and collect their feedback, and they need to provide ways for customers to interact with them that are convenient and immediate (Nambisan & Baron, 2009).

The Internet has become increasingly mobile and social over the last decade. Social media has rapidly expanded and businesses already use social media to develop relationships with their customers (The Nielsen Company, 2012). Today, people visit pages of organizations on Facebook or post tweets containing specific usernames of organizations on Twitter to provide instant feedback about their experiences with products and services (Jansen, 2009; Gummerus, 2012). These developments influence various aspects of everyday life by changing human behavior in both virtual and physical space. For example, people use social media more often through mobile devices. This broadens the potential for businesses to establish new forms of interaction with their customers as they move around. In addition, the situated displays that are often present in public places nowadays attract peoples' attention (Memarovic et al., 2012; Huang et al., 2008), facilitate interaction with them (Alt et al., 2013; Brignull & Rogers, 2003), and alter their behavior (Dalsgaard et al., 2011; O'Hara, 2003). This synthesis of social activity and technologically advanced environments forms an opportune channel for businesses to connect with customers and collect their feedback almost instantly. For example, organizations can post questions and concerns on public displays and people can use their social media accounts on smartphones to respond. Earlier research from similar environments has concentrated either on social interaction through public and private screens (Choi & Seeburger, 2011; Müller et al., 2010) or on behavior change due to interactive environments (Mathew, 2005; Jafarinaini et al.,

2005). The main focus of this study is to examine feedback-sharing behaviors facilitated through situated displays. In this particular setting, businesses can engage customers more naturally, as such interactions are completely voluntary (Nambisan & Baron, 2009). However, for the same reason, this setting also requires careful consideration of the mechanisms that influence people's motivation to participate.

This chapter seeks to identify the design principles that can harness social influence to engage people in sharing feedback. To accomplish that, the relevant background is outlined and a review of the related literature is provided. The primary purpose of this review is to share knowledge about the social influence principles that are relevant in the context of this study and to develop a theory-driven research framework. The secondary purpose of this review is to discuss how the said principles are interrelated and to what extent they explain users' perceptions about the effectiveness of socio-technical systems. Thus, the following research questions for this study are:

- RQ1:** Which social influence design principles are relevant for fostering user engagement in feedback sharing?
- RQ2:** How and to what extent do social influence design principles explain users' perceptions about the effectiveness of feedback sharing systems?

To answer these questions, this chapter presents a theoretical framework for identifying the social influence design principles pertinent for engaging people in feedback sharing, which further underpins a research model for assessing the effectiveness of feedback-sharing systems. Next, the chapter describes how the identified design principles are implemented in an information system, and their influence on feedback sharing is empirically tested with 37 users. Users' experiences with the system were measured through an online questionnaire and were analyzed with

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