

## Chapter 7

# The Web Site and Brand Trust as Antecedents of Online Loyalty: Results from Four Countries

**Horst Treiblmaier**  
*WU Vienna, Austria*

**Larry Neale**  
*Queensland University of Technology, Australia*

**Sandy Chong**  
*Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia*

### **ABSTRACT**

*As online business thrives, a company's Web presence holds enormous importance as a source of information, entertainment, and customer service for Internet users. Besides being user-friendly, a Web site should offer interesting and enjoyable content to attract online visitors in an ever-changing multimedia environment. Companies that operate globally must know how cultural differences influence the way potential customers perceive their sites. This paper presents a model that highlights the importance of ease of use, enjoyment, content, and brand trust for Web site loyalty. The model is subsequently tested in four countries: Australia, Japan, Mongolia, and the USA. The results show that perceptual differences exist: while ease of use is crucial for Web site loyalty in all four countries, the importance of content, perceived enjoyment, and brand trust varies across different cultures.*

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-1861-9.ch007

## **INTRODUCTION**

In today's business environment, displaying a professional Web presence is essential for any company that wants to be recognized as a global player. Customers expect Web sites to best serve their needs, no matter how diverse their expectations may be (Bélanger et al., 2006). Businesses face a myriad of trade-offs in creating their business Web presence. In addition to the usual Web site design considerations such as ease of use, visual appeal, trustworthiness and functionality, companies must also consider their culturally diverse and diverse users (Cyr, 2008; Ha & Stoel, 2009; Schaupp, Bélanger, & Fan, 2009).

Even though the Web is not a culturally neutral medium (Singh, Fassot, Chao, & Hoffman, 2004), large companies tend to build a global Web presence in order to strengthen their corporate identity and maintain consistent branding. In most cases, global businesses use the top level '.com' domain, and when they build country specific Web sites, they frequently strive to keep a consistent corporate identity by using similar designs. Google, Yahoo and Amazon provide good examples of the strategies available. The simple, Spartan design of the Google homepage is relatively consistent across all domains. Although the content may be different, the .com domain of Amazon ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)) resembles their Japanese site ([www.amazon.jp](http://www.amazon.jp)), with only minor differences in layout and design. Yahoo sites around the world also maintain consistency in design with slight differences such as more content on the Japanese home page ([www.yahoo.co.jp](http://www.yahoo.co.jp)). Still, the logo and the use of colors obviously represent the corporate design of Yahoo.

Even if national Web sites are used to reflect overarching cultural differences (Baack & Singh, 2007), the sites must still serve a diverse group of users with varying demographic, socioeconomic, and psychographic characteristics within each country. Furthermore, the technology available to Internet users such as monitor size, bandwidth, screen resolution, browser type, and access device

varies greatly around the world. Consequently, companies strive to build sites that appeal to a multitude of customers with diverse interests, while at the same time controlling costs and enhancing site functionality.

To better understand the costs and benefits of the trade-offs of Web site design, this study uses globally recognized brands, and investigates measures for site success in four countries with varying cultural backgrounds: Australia, Japan, Mongolia and the United States of America. The study introduces a parsimonious model which includes important antecedents of Web site success, and then tests the model with homogenous samples from the four countries. The results from the overall sample are presented along with differences between the countries. Finally, the study provides implications for researchers and practitioners along with suggestions for continuing research.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

A company's Web site can serve a number of different purposes such as selling, informing and promoting (Bélanger et al., 2006). The growing importance of the Internet in consumer life makes it essential for businesses to better understand what makes Web sites successful (Schaupp et al., 2009). There are many ways to measure the success of a Web site, but most are concerned with the concept of loyalty.

### **Loyalty**

Researchers describe loyalty as either unidimensional, or multidimensional with two independent dimensions: behavior and attitude (Daryanto, de Ruyter, Wetzels, & Patterson, 2010; Baldinger & Rubinson, 1996; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003). Definitions of loyalty frequently focus

18 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

[www.igi-global.com/chapter/web-site-brand-trust-antecedents/67514](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/web-site-brand-trust-antecedents/67514)

## Related Content

---

### The Relationship Between Content Typologies and Brand Engagement on Instagram: The Case of Futebol Clube do Porto

Bárbara Domingues and Jorge Remondes (2024). *Marketing Innovation Strategies and Consumer Behavior* (pp. 266-299).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-relationship-between-content-typologies-and-brand-engagement-on-instagram/344358](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-relationship-between-content-typologies-and-brand-engagement-on-instagram/344358)

### E-Marketing and Online Consumer Behavior

Neha Jain, Vandana Ahuja and Y. Medury (2014). *Transcultural Marketing for Incremental and Radical Innovation* (pp. 366-381).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/e-marketing-and-online-consumer-behavior/90409](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/e-marketing-and-online-consumer-behavior/90409)

### Brand Driven Mobile Marketing: 5 Theses for Today and Tomorrow

Christopher Quente (2012). *E-Marketing: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 1252-1267).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/brand-driven-mobile-marketing/66658](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/brand-driven-mobile-marketing/66658)

### Fostering Ecotourism Brands Through Local Engagement in Peru and the Maldives

Gulen Hashmi and Julie Roberts (2025). *Destination Branding and Bias in Ecotourism* (pp. 357-384).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/fostering-ecotourism-brands-through-local-engagement-in-peru-and-the-maldives/362984](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/fostering-ecotourism-brands-through-local-engagement-in-peru-and-the-maldives/362984)

### Plowing a Fertile Ground for Transformative Management Education

Sergio A. Castrillon-Orrego (2019). *International Journal of Marketing and Sales Education* (pp. 29-44).

[www.irma-international.org/article/plowing-a-fertile-ground-for-transformative-management-education/251212](http://www.irma-international.org/article/plowing-a-fertile-ground-for-transformative-management-education/251212)