

# **“I’ll look it up anyways”**

## **The Cyberspsychology of Trust**

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### **Abstract**

Why do people trust the first Google result? This research highlights the importance of instant gratification, personalisation and control to understand the evolving future of communication. The study has been designed to uncover interpersonal preferences across modern channels using mixed-methods and commercial experimentation. Traditional understandings of trust-building have been analysed, summarised and expanded to include the latest consumer expectations and trust-building methods via modern communication technologies. The psychological findings can be integrated into daily conversations, marketing campaigns and organisational structure.

**Keywords:** Cyberpsychology, Human-Technology Interaction, Instant Gratification, Digital Marketing, Human Instincts, Personalisation

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**Attestation of Authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the references), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JC', is written over a horizontal line.

By Jason Cunningham

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Why do people put their trust in the first search result? What can be discovered about trust-building through the rapid advancement of communication technologies? This research uncovers key elements of building trust and new methods to include in all friendly conversations, marketing campaigns and psychological research. The findings show that building trust has shifted with the times and trust can now be developed by satisfying the human desires for instant gratification, personalisation and control. A mixed-methods approach is used to identify new trust-building factors including a cyber experiment and comparative insights from a wide variety of industry experts and future leaders throughout the globe.

The research shows that building trust has changed over time and certain factors are no longer as relevant in communication and content publishers. Past research has shown that a long-running newspaper was trustworthy because it is tangible, something real to feel and hold, it has a recognisable brand and all of the neighbours believed it, so the entire population considered the newspaper to be trustworthy (Dwyer, 1987). Nowadays, the first Google result is viewed with the same validity and trust as the front page of the New York Times. With a shift in technology and news sources, consumers prefer something immediate that is easy to comprehend like a quick, high-definition video with a familiar voice. Communication technologies have been the main factor in the advancement of the human race and further research needs to be conducted, analysed, reported and built upon for centuries to come (Borden & Schwartz, 1965). To begin, the relevant areas of trust-building and internet usage have been critically analysed below in the Literature Review.

In comparison to research and strategies twenty years ago, advertisers and psychologists have been given access to an abundance of new behavioural information to integrate into personal conversations and mass marketing. Social media platforms and data collection agencies like Facebook, Apple and Google have been tracking and sharing their user's behaviour with details of keystrokes, text messages, location, camera, microphone and other privileges to learn about their users (Perez, 2018). With this unprecedented data, researchers have found common patterns throughout human behaviour that shed light on the human decision-making process and trust-building.

When studying interpersonal communication and trust building, the most advanced and researched field is advertising and marketing. Today's advertisers have more accuracy than ever with advanced profiling of individuals and insight into opportune timing and relevance of their message (Facebook, 2018). With new avenues including social media, targeted web ads and email blasts, it is crucial for an advertising strategy to "clarify its meaning before selecting the medium" because consumers anticipate their experience across platforms and associate a certain level of trust with each (Carnegie & Associates, 2011). With these new avenues researchers must understand how consumers interact with technology platforms and devices, this field is known as cyberspsychology.

Leveraging centuries of research in the human decision-making process, the subject of cyberpsychology began with preconceived notions and data from external observations (Norman, 2009). Now that researchers have access to trillions of data points willingly provided by participants, the field is accelerating past the traditional understandings of human psychology and techniques for building trust at scale.



Communication technologies have nearly become an extension of the human body and are increasingly become connected with the mind (Toma, 2010). To determine modern human behaviour, Facebook analyses and tests users in various emotional states to generate reports about their decision-making (Kramer, Guillory, Hancock, 2014). With their findings, Facebook has personalised the experience for each user and continues to learn about human behaviour (Fowler & Christakis, 2008). This intimate knowledge of each user is passed on to the advertiser in hopes of a profitable and beneficial relationship for all parties. Select reports are made available to the public and provide a comprehensive overview of the current cyberpsychology field. The leading email marketing platforms like Mailchimp provide consumer insights based on millions of emails per day and their user's behaviour in order to educate and benefit the community (Mailchimp, 2018). Additional abilities known as retargeting allow an advertiser to track their web visitors and connect with them again as they browse the internet. An advertiser can collect and leverage detailed reports about their audience to develop relationships, build trust and improve the overall success in their communication strategies (Adroll, 2018).

With an unprecedented growth rate, the internet, originally known as the World Wide Web, has penetrated all socio-economic, cultural, geographic and generational barriers to efficiently connect society around the globe.

Although it has taken time, many individuals and businesses have come to trust the internet as a valuable aspect of their day-to-day life. The adoption rate and measurable interactions provided by the World Wide Web allow researchers to gain unprecedented insight into the human decision-making process as outlined in this paper and research (Carnoy & Castells, 2001).

When considering the traditional models of building trust, societal interaction or the human decision-making process, the past research does not utilise all the new behavioural data now available to researchers and advertisers. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research in this paper contributes to the studies of the human desire for control, immediacy, personalisation and in-depth understandings of the trust associated with modern mediums.

The following literature review begins with a broad definition of advertising and narrows its focus down to effective advertising and the methods of measurement. The archival research continues onto the ethics of advertising discussed by philosophers, producers and consumers. As discussed over centuries, connecting the human race has played a vital role in advancing society as a whole. To accurately collect new data, the methodologies of past advertising research are summarised and encompassed in the research methodology of this paper including the survey results, cyber experiments and interview responses.

After analysing the survey and interview responses, modern consumer preferences can be explained by determining the level of control, immediacy and personalisation provided to the participant. The findings validate the importance of these message characteristics by defining similarities and exposing disparities across different events in modern life.

Each chapter in this paper relates to the study of cyberpsychology and begins with a definition and overview. The succeeding literature review provides a summary based on archival research of advertising campaigns, human tendencies and effective advertising. Within this paper, **Figure 2.1** shows a complete map of the traditional factors associated with building trust through advertising messages. Before closing the literature review, the

ethical implications of advertising and the societal advancements associated with consumers and producers are discussed. The flow of the paper provides a clear understanding of the cyberpsychology field and its increasing relevance for today's psychologists.

With consideration to the findings of the survey and interviews, a cyber experiment was conducted and its findings are explained in the remainder of this research document. The paper concludes with insight into best practices for interpersonal communication and human-technology interaction on an individual, social and societal basis. Additional notes are included in the Discussion section to assist future communicators as new technology becomes available to the masses.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

With communication and relationships being studied for millennia, today's communicators know that relationships are the most powerful aspect of building trust. Plato, Socrates and Aristotle expanded on the value of relationships and their findings still have an influence on modern society and education systems around the globe (Hassan, 2016). For the purpose of this research and the advancement of the academic community, this paper focuses on the commercial viability of modern mediums and their current ability to build trust. To effectively communicate and deliver trust, advertisers and psychologists have determined specific factors of relationships that play a key role among consumers through messaging. The most researched field of messaging comes from the advertising industry, and their past research is analysed and explained in the following section.

Advertising is defined as the paid, non-personal, mass communication from an identified sponsor through various channels for the purpose of informing a target market of a product, idea, or company (Wells, Burnett, Moriarty, 2003). Recent technology allows the mind of the audience to be put at the forefront of advertising design in order to establish and hold trust (Jobs, 1997). The receiver can interact with the message more than ever before and this relationship plays a crucial role in the ability to build trust through today's communication technologies.

A traditional advertisement can be described as a static image or bit of text found in a newspaper. Now, a modern advertising campaign can contain a personalised introduction, call-to-action, live chat features and artificially intelligent responses (Kraus, Meier, Eggers, Bouncken & Schuessler, 2016). This literature review covers the types of

messages that advertisers can deliver now and then discusses the trust-building factors associated with each delivery method.

### **Types of Advertising Messages**

The digital advancements in communication have empowered advertisers over the past two decades to reach the right people at the right time to effectively build relationships. The latest and greatest tools at their disposal have come from new technology and have added the ability to integrate personalised marketing into existing advertising strategies (Carnegie & Associates, 2011).

Digital communication affords marketers with the ability to customise content with intimate details of their target market, including first name, past purchase history, interests and more (McCoy, Everard, Polak & Galletta, 2007). By definition, this “personalised” communication contradicts the traditional definition of advertising outlined above. Although, for the remainder of this paper, digital marketing will be described as a subcategory of advertising and potentially the most efficient method of building relationships and trust (Mailchimp, 2018).

One of the first major advancements in digital marketing and targeted advertising came from the introduction of the “moving picture box” (Giddens, 2015). The television allowed people to start seeing familiar locations on a screen and familiar faces that they begin to trust. These are the first steps to personalisation via scalable targeting. Traditional methods of building trust, like a familiar face, are now achieved at scale through YouTube, television and more (Rive & Karmokar, 2016).

## **Crossing Screens and Borders**

With the myriad of mediums afforded to today's digital marketers, it is nearly impossible to have a campaign stick within a single channel. The benefits of cross-channel marketing, also known as transmedia, cross-platform and multi-screen marketing, are comparable to frequent word-of-mouth referrals from trusted friends over time (Jenkins, 2010).

Telling a story, as outlined by Steve Jobs, takes creativity, drive, knowledge and a goal (Gallo, 2011). This has remained true over time and can be shown in stories being passed down through generations like Maori chiefs and religious disciples (Te Ara, 2018).

With the introduction of new technology, the methods to achieve "effective advertising" have changed, and it allows marketers to know the measurable success of their advertising campaigns and client relationships. The following sections describe the new opportunities available to build and track relationships through technology.

## **Finding Purpose**

To measure the effectiveness of an advertising campaign, traditional models relied on customers experiencing an ad then entering a storefront or calling for more information. David Ogilvy, a prominent figure in the advertising community, has been recognised for his success as a door-to-door salesman. In Ogilvy's case, effective advertising would lead to an invitation into a prospect's home. Still true today, the goal of most advertising campaigns is to build trust in the community and increase revenue (Carnegie & Associates, 2011). The next section explains how advertisers and marketing departments can measure their relationships and determine if their strategy is working.

## **Return on Investment**

Building trust drives revenue since consumers are less likely to purchase a product from a company they do not trust. With recent advancements in reporting, an advertiser can determine how successful their campaigns have been in building trust or generating engagement (Hassan, 2016). ROI is the standard acronym for determining if a marketing campaign created enough revenue to be worth the initial investment. ROI can be measured with key performance indicators including sales transactions, new subscribers, event attendees, phone calls, clicks, views and hundreds of other, product-specific metrics (Adroll, 2018). For the purpose of this study, effective advertising is measured by engagement, meaning the target was interested in dedicating their time to explore the advertiser's message.

A "click" is a digital measurement that shows an individual was interested enough to willingly pursue more information by following a web link. (AdRoll, 2018) Click-through-rates, CTR, can be determined by analysing the total number of clicks with the total number of opportunities to click, known as impressions. The CTR can be part of key performance indicators, which attribute to the calculation of a campaign's ROI and overall success in building trust among consumers.

A "conversion" takes measurement to the next level and shows the success of an ad campaign related to the advertiser's goals. For example, measuring the percentage of people that 'clicked to call the sales team' or chose to 'watch an introductory video'. Each of these factors can be assigned a dollar value to help estimate the ROI (Google AdWords, 2018). The value of a ten minute phone call is not the same as a repeat customer but converting someone from a caller to a customer has to be assigned some prospective dollar value in order to effectively measure ROI and provide accurate reports.

With these reports, advertisers can determine how successful their advertising campaign has been and what factors are related to building trust and revenue.

## **Prove It**

With today's technology, marketers have drastically improved their ability to measure their success, including total reach, impressions and engagement (Google Analytics, 2018).

Although, in most cases there are too many factors outside the control of the advertiser to get completely accurate ROI statistics. These factors can include negative publicity, market shifts, technical issues and competitors. Data-driven marketers still need to rely on human instincts, human-centred design and a bit of good fortune in order to achieve the desired results from their marketing campaigns.

## **Tracking Success with Video**

There are multiple ways to track the success of video across various channels. First, it is important to note that the human-decision making process has already shifted due to a demand for video and Mailchimp claims that 16% more emails are opened when the word "Video" is included in the email subject line (Mailchimp, 2018). Marketers can benefit because video allows the advertiser to have total control of content and videos can evoke emotions in the viewer that text articles and most still photos are unable to do (Tucker, 2015). This full immersion in sight and sound is powerful and a psychologist observed that kids in Hanmer Springs, New Zealand were transfixed by a video on a muted TV. This shows that audio is not a requirement and sight can be fully immersive. To effectively deliver a message, and increase the likelihood of establish trust, advertisers can leverage beautiful video content in their delivery (Tucker, 2015).



## **Tracking Success with Conversions**

Google AdWords has shown that advertising campaigns can be optimised and user experience can be tweaked based on the campaign goals. By setting monetary values of user actions and defining conversions, advertisers can truly understand their ROI throughout marketing campaigns. “With AdWords Conversion Tracking, you can see how effectively your ad clicks lead to valuable customer activity, such as website purchases, phone calls, app downloads, newsletter sign-ups and more” (Google Adwords, 2018).

When discussing ROI with the Director of Interactive Marketing for a global real estate brand, the interviewee explained that building trust is a major factor in their marketing strategy because they view clients to be lifetime customers. To determine how effective their campaigns have been, they “make an estimation based on a formula: Total transaction dollar value is X and Y% of leads turn into transactions, so  $X*Y$  = the ‘value’ of a lead. [It’s] not perfect and we don’t heavily rely on the output, but it works as another general data point [for Google AdWords campaigns]”. Companies that have a downloadable product or e-commerce integrations can benefit even more from ROI tracking compared to the long sales cycles of luxury real estate.

## **Tracking Success with Social Media**

Fostering personal relationships is easy on social media and Facebook allows advertisers to track each individual that visits a website. Then it connects that data with personal demographics and online interactions to see who is already engaging with the advertiser. From there, the advertiser can accurately target and connect with their past web visitors while they browse their Facebook news feed or other mobile apps (Facebook, 2018). Facebook captures the details and user data, while also asking for more information from each person. Nobody imagined that users would be so willing to give up their own

information to a corporation like Facebook and these social profiles have created a new playing field for marketers to efficiently reach the right people and inevitably build trust at scale (Mueller, 2016).

### **Tracking Success with Frequency**

Mailchimp has provided an easy way to track success based on email opens, email clicks, forwards and optimal times to send. This information is robotically analysed to help Mailchimp's clients and their email campaigns. Mailchimp releases reports that shed light on the latest consumer trends and specific suggestions to improve the campaigns an advertiser is currently running. For digital products, like app downloads, Mailchimp case studies have found that approximately 4 emails must be opened before a subscriber becomes a customer (Mailchimp, 2018). This metric requires engagement from the prospect by opening an average of 4 emails and assumes that the price point and product is reasonable and desirable.

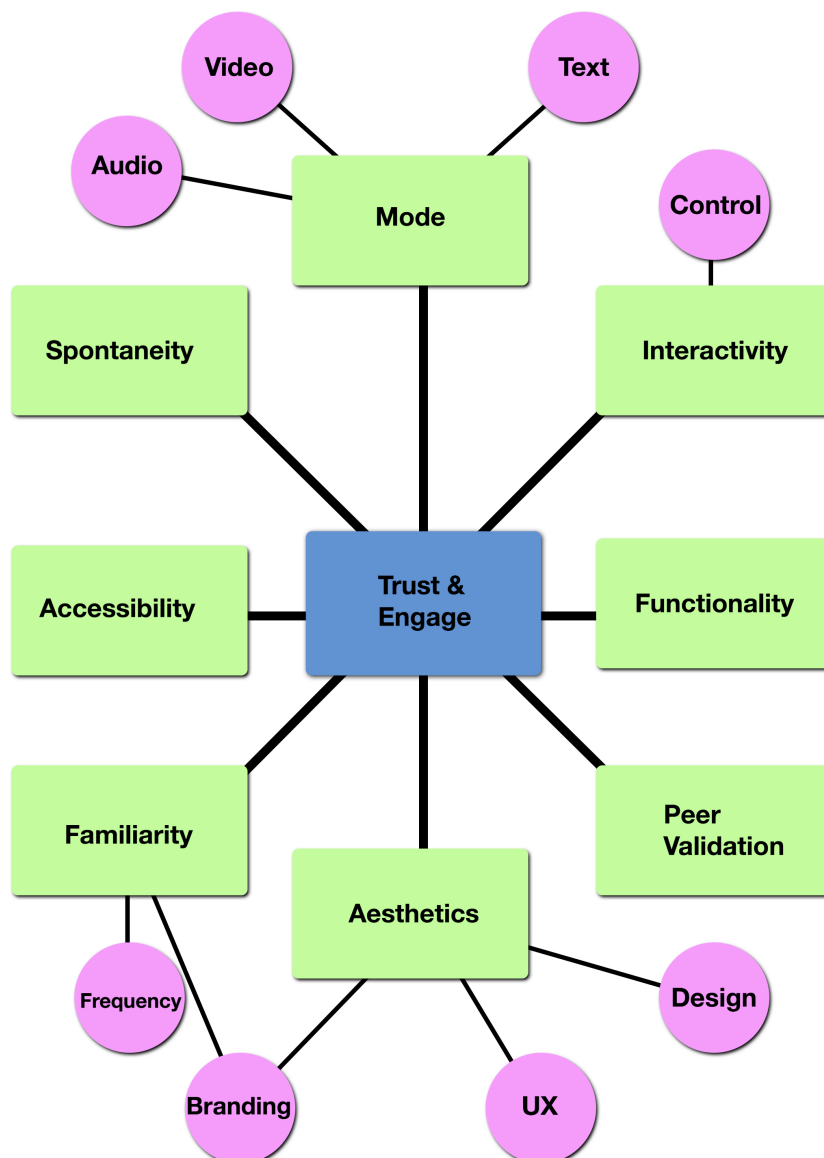
To reduce “spam” and negative feelings, ad platforms allow a frequency cap per campaign, so that an advertiser can determine the maximum number of times an individual sees their ad each day (Google AdWords, 2018). Since advertisers can see their success, they have been able to determine some key factors that must be included in their messages. These factors are outlined below and mapped in Figure 2.1.

### **Summary of New Communication Technologies**

When considering all the new aspects associated with communication technologies, it is clear that methods for building and analysing trust have changed over time. New consumer preferences have been brought to the attention of advertisers, new mediums have been used to reach consumers and new research must be conducted to keep pace

with the constantly evolving landscape of communication technologies. With an understanding of all the mediums currently available in 2019, the following section examines more recent research about the factors associated with successful messaging, relationship building and trust online.

**Figure 2.1 - Building Your Traditional Message**



**Figure 2.1** shows the key messaging factors outlined in this Literature Review. These factors are associated with building trust and relationships so the audience will trust and engage with the message. According to past research, the advertiser must fulfil all of these prerequisites to ensure their message is effectively delivered, well-received and considered to be trustworthy.

### **Accessibility**

First and foremost, the target market must be able to access the information an advertiser intends to deliver. Traditional advertisers believed that mass-mailings and cold calls would be the most effective way to reach their audience for the first time (Borden & Schwartz, 1965). Nowadays, these tactics are considered obtrusive and annoying, commonly referred to as junk-mail and telemarketing. With advances in technology, consumers now have their own personal devices that connect them with social media platforms and the rest of the world via the internet. This allows advertisers to take a more targeted approach by choosing which devices receive their message as opposed to blanketing the local neighbourhood with the same ad.

David Ogilvy, "The Father of Advertising" according to a 1962 Time Magazine article, used to introduce his product by knocking on doors. After much success, Ogilvy developed systems and strategies around the human-decision making process and his insight continues to influence modern marketing campaigns across all levels (Borden & Schwartz, 1965). For a marketer, it has always been important to understand the demographic of the target market, then determine where to reach them. Traditionally, the

best methods have been newspaper and radio advertisements based on location of the target market. This allowed a local retailer to reach their neighbours and a local service provider to connect with clients in the area. As targeting has evolved with direct mailings and digital marketing, more accurate and informed messages can be delivered to the perfect audience and tailored to their preferences (Facebook, 2018). The advertiser must deliver the message in a way that integrates in with day-to day-life of the target market.

Today's day-to-day life involves the internet and individuals choose to seek out their own information online (Xiang, Magnini & Fesenmaier, 2015). This accessibility to global information can be compared to the accessibility of a local market and grocery store: consumers choose to trust and engage with accessible businesses. Advertisers can leverage the internet and online platforms to be tools for ad delivery and relationship building, but the allure of building trust is not guaranteed just by delivering a message to an audience. This research continues on to unravel the modern methods of building trust.

## **Aesthetics**

Humans are naturally drawn to beautiful things like a bug is drawn to the light. Ogilvy relied on a finely dressed salesman to whizz passed the initial barriers to entry (Ogilvy, 1935). Even today, advertisers must ensure their message is beautiful, visually engaging and easy to understand. The latest psychological research shows the importance of putting the consumer at the forefront of the message and understanding human desires before providing a solution. These message attributes have been coined "Human-Centred Design" and refer to the best practices for creating a smooth and trustworthy message delivery. These factors may be the most important aspect of message delivery because the entire goal is to reduce cognitive load, making the human brain work less and focus only on receiving the intended message. Human-Centred Design takes many factors into

account in order to make the digital experience seem fluid and natural. In 2006, Oviatt developed the principles of HCD with the following guidelines:

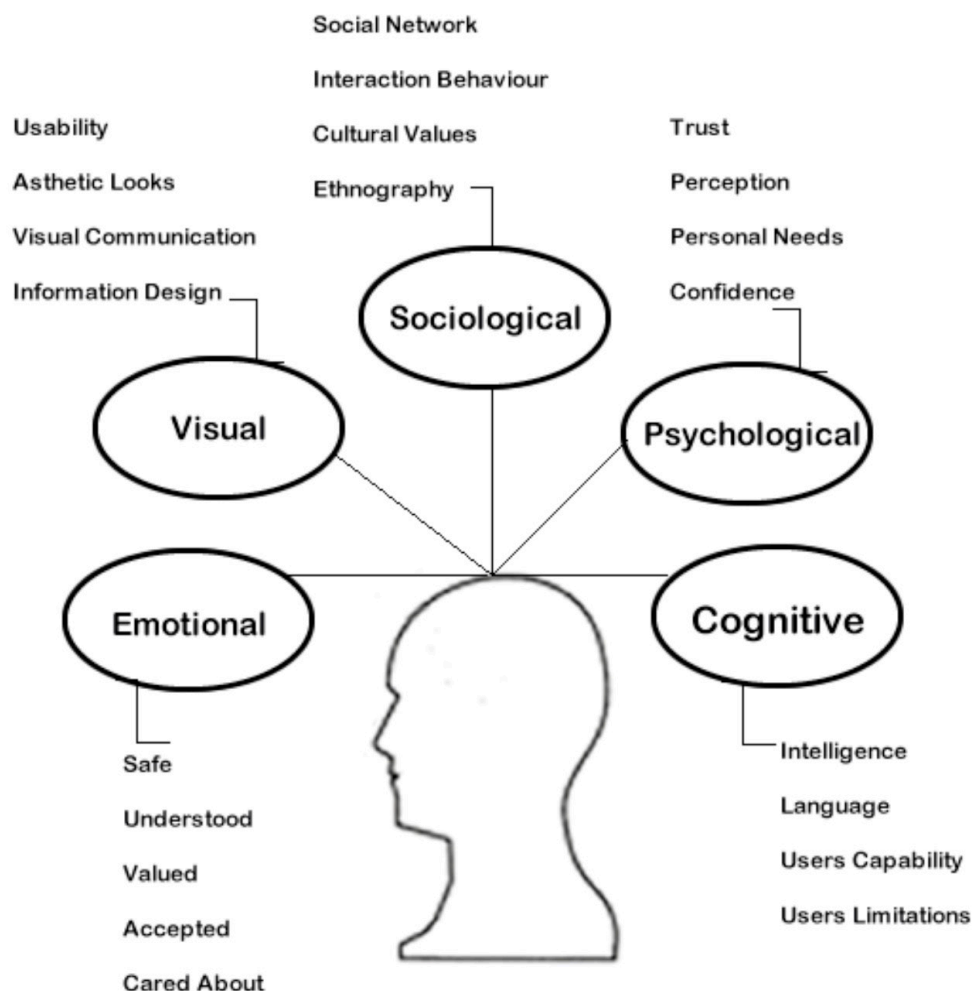
### Summary of HCD Principles

Users should not have to learn and adapt to new systems; the systems should be built around the user so that:

1. Existing work practices can be utilised.
2. Unnatural movements and complexities are minimised.
3. Reading and cognitive load are minimised with symbols, images and video.
4. Distractions and interruptions are minimised to retain longer attention and focus including software bugs, system errors or in-app notifications.

**Figure 2.2 - Know Your Audience**

Sourced from Brown, 1998



To abide by these principles, **Figure 2.2** has been included to show a visual representation of HCD factors and the associated cognitive processes (Brown, 1998). “If designers have a good understanding of these disciplines they will be able to design interfaces that will be utilised” (Karmokar, 2012). If the interface is already being utilised, the consumer already trusts that medium and will be more likely to engage and trust the message being delivered.

### **User Experience**

To capture and keep the user’s focus, an advertiser’s message must be accessible and easy to understand. The UX, or user experience, is the framework and path that the advertiser creates around their message. They must consider the message’s “appearance, navigation, functionality and interaction” (Karmokar, 2012) so that the overall design is visually appealing and logical. When examining traditional techniques for user experience, Ogilvy suggested that each salesmen learns their client perfectly before knocking on their door. This provides the salesman with the ability to control the direction of the conversation by understanding the client’s interests, pain points and frustrations beforehand. When considering user experience, the advertiser can use a variety of tactics to achieve simplicity and make the message feel familiar and trustworthy without personal involvement (Koch & Benlian, 2015).

### **Branding**

By maintaining a uniform style and feel across messages, an advertiser can create a familiar look that a user begins to recognise and trust (Karmokar, Singh & Tan, 2013). This method of brand-building has been successfully employed by newspaper conglomerates to build trust over time (Dwyer, 1987). Digital branding methods are more complex than

just a logo and style, because today's marketers can integrate branding throughout their messages, especially on their call-to-action. A call-to-action is typically a big button at the bottom of a message, which allows a user to explore more information about the delivered message (Mailchimp, 2018). The call-to-action must be easy to see, easy to find and seamlessly integrated to the user experience. Typically, the goal of a message is to have some action taken. An advertiser can increase their success rate by providing a fluid experience throughout their message eventually leading users smoothly into action.

## **Functionality**

A new luxury afforded to marketers and consumers is distance. No longer will a marketer have the door dramatically slammed in their face, leaving both parties with strong emotions. Instead, consumers can simply press the back button to leave a website and the marketer does not feel the immediate shame of rejection. Contrary to door-knocking techniques, today's marketers can analyse their rejections from an unbiased viewpoint. These digital rejections can be measured as a percentage and known as bounce rates (Google, 2018). The viewer always has the ability to leave so the advertiser must keep their message as engaging as possible to avoid high bounce rates.

Similar to having a fluid conversation with an attractive salesperson, digital messages can intrigue the target market and entice them to engage (Oviatt, 2006). The functionality of a message can overlap with user experience described above, although the functionality focuses more on the viewer's ability to navigate in, out and around the advertiser's message. The functionality of the message must be considered when determining the method for ad delivery across modern mediums. Traditional newspaper marketers did not have to the ability to add functionality into their message and they relied solely on the design of their ad before the reader inevitably turned to the next page. Nowadays, the



advertiser must determine the abilities, requirements and limitations across specific channels including computer, smart phone, email, social media platforms and more (Wells, Burnett, & Moriarty, 2003). Today's platforms also provide the ability to involve friends and trusted insight from family and peers.

## Peer Validation



- Sourced from [nba.com/warriors](https://www.nba.com/warriors) (2018)

Ogilvy would get to know the neighbours and leverage their insight and relationships to prepare other meetings with prospects and clients. Once he gained a friendly relationship with a client he would begin to learn about their neighbours and friends. As a society, humans have always shown a tendency to work together in order to achieve bigger goals. There is an inherent trust in a teammate and advertisers must consider this when determining how to deliver their message (Islam & Rahman, 2016). When traveling somewhere new, a friend may introduce the local newspaper and advise that “it is the best” and can obviously be trusted. An advertiser could make a wise choice by aligning

themselves with that specific newspaper because of the positive effect of word-of-mouth referrals, also known as peer validation. Radio hosts become a trusted news source and familiar voice so their endorsement carries a lot of weight in the buying habits of consumers. Social media makes it easier than ever for friends to share information with each other. This ability to share can also be leveraged by advertisers who can encourage their readers to share their message on social media (Koch & Benlian, 2015). The concepts of virality and sharability have been discussed by Henry Jenkins and defined as the “ability for the target market to promote the ad on behalf of the advertiser” (Jenkins, 2009). Strategies can be developed to increase the advertisers endorsements by making it simple for their clients to leave positive Google Reviews, Facebook Reviews and other success stories across social media (Koch & Benlian, 2015).

Peer validation is a highly effective way to build trust and is commonly referred to as influencer marketing. It is essential for brands to determine who their regional and local influencers are and then provide those influencers with tools that speak for the brand. Influencer marketing is considered “better value” because the cost to sponsor a local influencer is cheaper and more relatable than celebrity endorsements (Adweek, 2015). To build trust initially, an advertiser can leverage peer validation, perfect functionality and the ability for each user to interact and control the message.

## **Interactivity**

Witty banter, side hobbies and industry knowledge can help a salesperson to keep the focus of an individual for the moment. On a larger scale, newspaper publishers build their relationships over time by continuously providing relevant information in a comfortable way (Dwyer, 1987). The newspaper conglomerates have spent millions to determine how thick their paper should be, how black the ink can get and the preferred size of the font.

“There is something special about sitting down with a newspaper and feeling the crinkle between your fingers” (Kingston, 2009). Jump forward to today’s information and the crinkling sound is long gone and replaced with a swipe-right or a double tap. Similar to UX and functionality, interactivity allows people to begin trusting a message while they spend time engaging with the message. With a digital screen available, an advertiser’s message can be multi-faceted and include more than a printed newspaper ad. Insead, Key elements of a message entice the viewer, known as the introductory creative, and then lead a user to a landing page that helps to increase the advertiser’s revenue (Monjo, 2018).

One of the most extreme cases of virality was in 2016 with the introduction of Pokemon Go, which is known as the most viral app ever created (Niantic, 2018). The app became a daily passion for millions of global users within a few weeks of its launch. Pokemon Go relied on existing mediums so that users could easily access the application. The thrill of the app was the user’s ability to interact with their real geographic surroundings through augmented reality (Popomaronis, 2018). The concept of interactivity provides the user with the ability to control the message and personalise it to their desires. For thousands of years, humans have been using tools to advance their own agenda and advertisers can create messages that feel like a tool to be used by a consumer looking to immediately benefit themselves or entertain their brain.

In a recent study, researchers found that different social media channels bring about different personality traits (Taber & Whittaker, 2018). Users have formed a relationship with various platforms and chosen how to represent themselves accordingly. In their research, Taber & Whittaker found that participants “have to manage multiple ‘selves’ across different platforms. In other words, they have to remember to be bubbly and open on

Snapchat but more [respectful] on Facebook.” Since users have a predetermined expectation when using a specific platform, advertisers must prepare their messages accordingly.

### **Spontaneity**

It's True!! :)

A little surprise can increase engagement! Instead of running the same newspaper ad over and over again, advertisers found that multiple ads with a cohesive message increased engagement as opposed to running the same ad repeatedly over time (Google Analytics, 2018). Recent technology by Google allows advertisers to understand, in real-time, how the user is behaving on their website. With this real-time understanding, advertisers can interact with their users by showing a flashy banner before they exit the page or chat box when necessary (Privy, 2018).

In 1935, decades before programmatic advertising and behavioural demographics, David Ogilvy advised that the “worst fault a salesman can commit is to be a bore” (Ogilvy, 1935). Ogilvy relied on his own observations and interactions with other salesmen in order to determine which methods worked and did not work in sales. Whether the prospect liked him or not, Ogilvy would plan to see them again so that they would not forget him.

### **Familiarity**

Ogilvy was fantastic in social situations and understood the value of personal, ongoing relationships with prospects and clients. He advised salesmen to become a familiar face in the neighbourhood and consistently interact with their prospect's interests (Ogilvy,

1935). Advertisers have always been able to build long-lasting relationships with clients and newspaper publishers have been extremely successful in providing a familiar product, something that the consumer can rely on every day. The same logo is always in the same place, the same section headers make it easy for people to interact with the newspaper and the newspaper can always be found at the same coffee shop or delivered to their doorstep. Radio hosts can become a friend, someone that commuters spend 4 hours a day with.

To become familiar, digital ads can use the same colours to deliver their messages time after time. Branding makes a message easier to understand and more comfortable for the viewer. Similar to shortspeak described in George Orwell's 1984, branding removes the need to understand a wide variety of words, Orwell's shortspeak uses the same root words with descriptive prefixes. Instead of knowing two words like "good" and "bad", shortspeak teaches citizens of 1984 "good" and "ungood". This is the same technique that brands can use for familiarity and a website can be comprised of just a handful of elements that are used in different combinations to create a fluid experience (Karmokar, Singh & Tan, 2013). Through constant repetition, a consumer can become familiar with the advertiser and their message across a specific platform. As outlined in past research, familiarity builds trust.

## **Frequency**

When establishing familiarity, research has been conducted to determine the optimum frequency for a message to be delivered without destroying its ability to feel trusted.

Every marketing campaign is different yet behavioural analytics continue to help advertisers determine an individual's propensity to engage with the first message, second

message and so on. With this data, advertisers can send targeted emails to their audience based on individual engagement (Mailchimp, 2018). Similarly, Facebook provides advertisers with the ability to put frequency caps within a campaign to limit the number of ads a consumer sees per day. A recent case study by digital marketing experts found that Google AdWords advertisements reached their maximum effectiveness when viewed for the 10th time, which resulted in 1 in 1000 display ads actually being clicked (McIntyre, 2018). Since consumers are already online, advertisers just need to determine where to put their message and how many times they want to reach the same individual. The next factor for an advertiser to consider is the channel and mediums that people choose from every day to communicate with friends, family, clients, employers and more.

### **Channels and Mediums**

Beyond reading, newspapers have no other way to deliver their message to the target market. It is trustworthy to have a tangible product because it makes the viewer feel that it's available and real. Radio ads make it easier on the consumer because they can simply listen to a message instead of being forced to read through and comprehend the message. The latest information shows that video combined with audio is the most successful way to deliver a message because the message is carefully crafted by the advertiser and the viewer cannot misinterpret due to a reading error, dyslexia or static on the radio (Google, 2018). A face-to-face meeting will always be the most effective, because it is a real 1-on-1 conversation that provides direct eye contact, which naturally increases trust by releasing Oxytocin in the brain (Guastella, Mitchell & Dadds, 2008). Oxytocin is a naturally produced chemical in the brain that has been associated with eye contact, physical touch and trust-building.

If a user watches a video with the audio on, they are immersed in sight and sound. But what if they are distracted or unable to hear the audio? Is this more effective than reading a billboard? Each message needs to be assessed by medium, but advertisers must consider that specific channels have inherent potential for user errors.

One of the most well-known digital marketing campaigns was launched by Cambridge Analytica and took a cross-channel marketing approach to connect with its target market (Monjo, 2018). The Cambridge Analytica campaign was designed to promote political viewpoints by identifying their target market and connecting with the audience across channels, including social media, email and direct mail. With a clear view of each individual in their target market, they developed campaigns specific to each socio-economic group by region. These tactics are considered to be the industry standard, but they have also raised concerns of privacy among consumers (Monjo, 2018). Philosophers and consumers have debated privacy and the ethics of advertising for centuries and the next section expands on the works of influential philosophers including John Kenneth Galbraith, Friedrich Hayek and David Ogilvy and explains why communication technologies must continue to advance and their effects to be studied.

### **Ethics of Advertising: Fair or Forced?**

Why study advertising methods and the advancement of communication technologies? The advancement of communication technologies has shown to be the leading factor in the advancement of the human race (Borden & Schwartz, 1965). Although, philosophers continue to ask if these advancements are designed for the benefit of the advertiser and the product or are they truly designed to solve problems for consumers.

Is all advertising immoral due to the direct claims that the consumer needs the product being advertised? Or is the “identified sponsor” just conveying a positive message about their brand? Effective advertising means that it convinced, or motivated, a large amount of the target market to engage with the product (Pratt, McCabe, Cortes-Jimenez & Blake, 2009). Would this product have been purchased, or even considered for purchase, had the company not had an effective advertising campaign? Many viewpoints have been taken on the specific topic of advertising:

***“Advertising degrades the people it appeals to; it deprives them of their will to choose.”*** – Carrie Snow, 1999

***“Advertising generally works to reinforce consumer trends rather than to initiate them.”*** – Michael Schudson, 2001

The ethical argument originates around the idea of free will. Does an individual have the ability to make decisions for themselves or are they forcibly changed after seeing something new, like an advertisement?

## **Helplessly Convinced**

To gain a better understating of the arguments and points made by those that believe advertising is unjust, this paper critically analyses the basis of their beliefs. John Kenneth Galbraith was a famous economist that believed advertising was the direct cause of creating wants that otherwise would have never surfaced. He argued that corporations do not create advertisements to inform the public about products which satisfy desires, rather “to bring into beings wants that previously did not exist” (Galbraith, 1958). In his book, *The Affluent Society*, he refers to this tactic as “the dependence effect” and argues



that it is comparable to a doctor running over pedestrians just to increase the number of available patients. The advertiser is metaphorically the doctor and the patients are viewers of the advertisements; they are unwillingly forced to spend money on the corporation so that they can improve their lives.

Galbraith goes on to say that consumers have no choice but to believe the messages conveyed through advertisements. This means that Galbraith does not believe that the viewer has free will, nor the ability to determine if the glamorised product is worth their money. He says that once someone has viewed a product they have no power to resist the urge to buy it. This quote assumes that the message was trustworthy and effective in its delivery, regardless of channel or medium.

This goes back to the question, is an individual able to choose for him or herself? One belief is that the human mind is ever changing and every nanosecond makes one an entirely new person. This means that each new occurrence can and does, change who a person is and how they process their surroundings. The human brain can remember and analyse every aspect of a day and then dreams can even have an effect on lifelong decision-making. Subconsciously, the human mind is always being altered and viewing the world differently (Oppenheimer & Kelso, 2015).

Many agree with Galbraith and the idea that advertising leaves viewers helpless. Advertisements do have the ability to instil desires into a clueless spectator. Exciting, new products like an iPad were never desired by the public but are now running rampant through wish lists and dreams of children and professionals alike. The public never

needed Bluetooth headsets until research established the safety and simplicity of this new communication technology.

Galbraith's argument does not consider the fact that humans seek and acquire knowledge from outside sources and he proposes that individuals do not have any motivation to grow or become better. This means that parents would have no effect on children and stories of failures and mistakes would be irrelevant until each individual experienced the struggles firsthand. Contrary to Galbraith's thoughts, humans have shown that it is possible to learn about a specific field, even if it is solely observed by surrounding evidence. For example, black holes cannot actually be observed, because they absorb all of the light required to see them, but astronomers know black holes exist due to the effects on the immediate surrounding area (Hawking, 1977).

Science can recognise and report observable facts, but cannot rule out all possibilities simply by observing outcomes. The idea that a single person, watching an ad, can have their lives changed forever can only be observed and cannot be proven. Galbraith has validity in his statements that advertisers create wants in consumers, but without free will, those marketing departments would have never formed nor could they have imagined a world that could benefit from their products.

## Destined for Greatness

***“Advertising is only evil when it advertises evil things.”***

- David Ogilvy, 1983

Contrary to Galbraith's ideas, Ogilvy argues that advertising promotes good, due to the fact that it enhances the quality of life of individuals in many ways. The desire for luxury items provides the motivation for people to work harder and do their best, rather than sit around and settle for homelessness and starvation (Ogilvy, 1935). Friedrich Hayek, another well-known name in the ethical argument of advertising, criticises Galbraith by saying that the creation of psychic wants did not originate with modern advertising (Hayek, 1961).

***“Advertising is speech. It's regulated because it's often effective speech.”***

-Jef Richards, 1994

Richards makes a valid point, because if advertising were not effective, the topic would not be up for debate. The most recent debates and concerns revolve around privacy as mentioned in the Cambridge Analytica campaign. With corporations targeting specific individuals based on assumed desires, advertising is likely to become even more effective in the future. As long as the product seems to fill a void, the consumer will feel they need the product.

Hayek observed that “our social environment creates many of our preferences” (Gans, King & Mankiw, 2011). This takes Galbraith's argument and turns it around, but not fully. Hayek argues that advertising and other factors around us shape our decisions, but

advertising alone does not create a want or desire. When one sees their neighbour driving a Ferrari it could create an immediate want for the car, but is that considered advertising? Is the little logo, or the streamlined body attributed to promoting the product that Ferrari sells? It's just a car, a mode of transportation, but is it a natural desire for humans to want to travel in a vehicle that is better, nicer, faster and more exciting? Indeed it is, but that want is not created just because the neighbour saw a Ferrari, the want already existed before the Ferrari even pulled out of the garage.

This dives into the belief that wants already exist and the means to satisfy those wants are provided through advertisements. When one sees an advertisement, they do not immediately want that product. They want the idea of that product; an individual wants to make their lives easier whether it is through communication, simplicity, speed, power or other advancements.

Included in the works by Hayek, points are made that perpetuate the fact that without the desire for something greater, society could never advance. Humans would be stuck in the dark ages, without knowing or caring if they were happy or not. As proven by time, humans do have the ability to imagine and create. Societies have been able to communicate and grow through innovative ways and provided with the opportunity to learn from mentor's mistakes, rather than repeating failures and only advancing by pure luck. Hayek says unsatisfied wants will not be satisfied by the consumer if left alone, instead it requires an outside force to satisfy the wants of consumers, because consumers aren't generally their own producers (Galbraith, 1999).

## **Want It or Not?**

These arguments both agree that advertising has an effect on consumers and both say that people are changed after viewing an ad regardless of the relevancy, but the core difference is whether a want is immediately instilled in the viewer upon seeing an ad or if their want had already existed.

Galbraith and those on his side, feel that wants are created when a new product is viewed. This means that man has no desire to do better, unless “better” is directly placed in front of him, tantalising him. Although with this train of thought, is it possible for new ideas to even be generated? According to the points made by Galbraith, the answer would be ‘No’. He lived under the impression that advertisers alone create the wants of society. He did not consider the fact that idea generation involves free will and creativity, neither of which can exist under Galbraith’s theory (Winch & Rothbard, 1964).

Hayek takes a more realist view on the matter. He believes that wants are part of human instinct. The need to improve or protect one’s life is the predecessor to every want. To be satisfied with one’s surroundings is the only way to reach true happiness, but even at that point, one’s life can be improved through technological breakthroughs, entertainment and advances in science and healthcare (Hayek, 1961). People strive for ‘the perfect life’ and although everyone’s view of ‘the perfect life’ is different, the want for ‘better’ still exists. Advertisements inform viewers how to get one step closer to their view of perfection.

Although, Galbraith is correct in his view that production can shape wants, it is not the sole creator of wants. This is because each new invention also creates a change in an

individual's view of "the perfect life". The general want for a perfect life had already existed and is supported by Hayek's reasonings.

When considering today's mediums, even more human desires are exposed. An individual must willingly participate and engage in order to launch their Facebook profile. They have the ability to control their online presence and outward appearance (Toma, 2010).

### **Closing Thoughts on Ethics**

The paid, non-personal communication to a specific group is not a method of creating needless transactions in the world's marketplace. Advertising is the fuel for the ever-burning flame that keeps humanity striving for something greater. Without the potential of a brighter future, mankind would have stopped growing and creating long ago.

Galbraith failed to go into detail about what a want is and how the first want came into existence. Food, shelter and other requirements aside, humanity must have desired more. Nobody wanted a fire, until the first fire was lit. Nobody wanted to listen to music until the first song was heard. Mankind started somewhere and it started due to the fact that individuals have dreams and the ability to achieve more than their yesterday's world provided.

The power to reason is mankind's greatest strength in comparison to the other creatures on the surface of this planet (Suddendorf, 2018). If we did not have this advantage, we would not have progressed from the cave man era, to a world in which consumers benefit from running water, global communication and reliable energy. We have only made progress due to the desire for more. There were no advertisements for Model T's when

Henry Ford woke up and created the automobile, but he still wanted it and he effectively created a want that continues to inspire people around the globe.

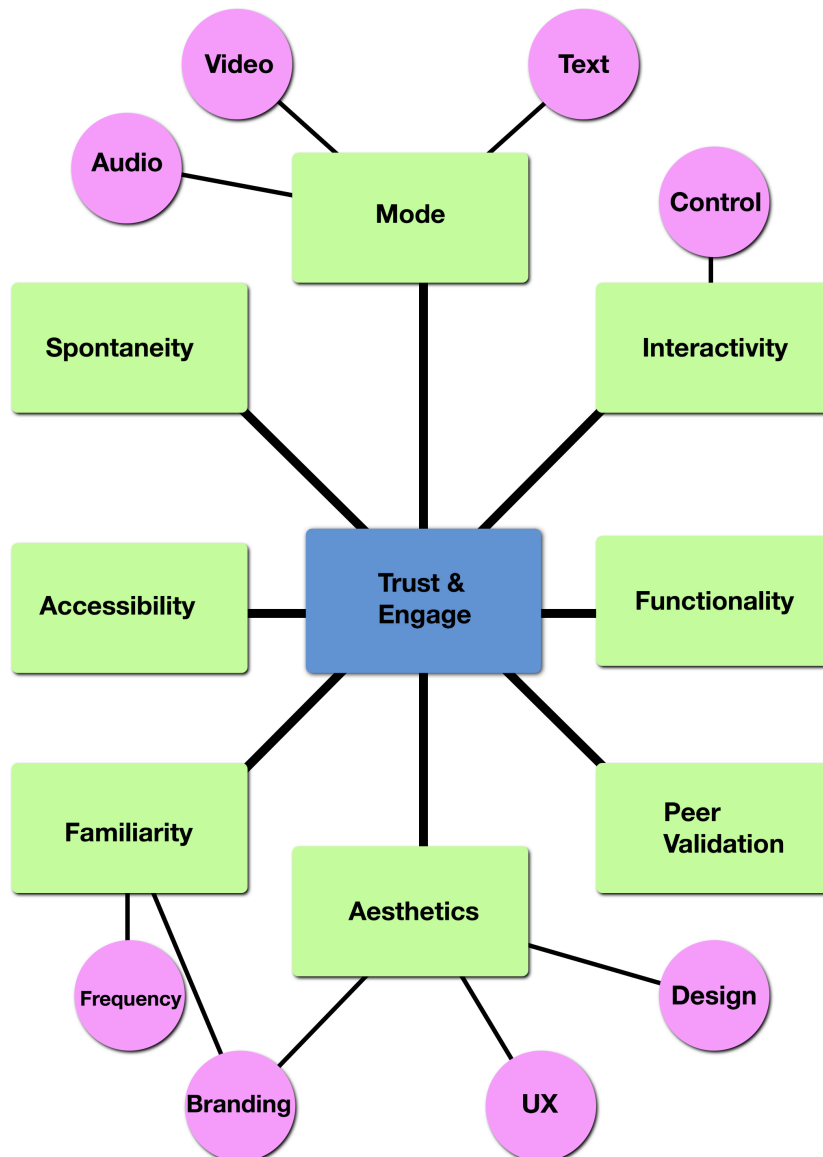
A want is a burning desire to improve one's life. A want is not created from an ad, it is answered. Progress will always be made to make the individual's life easier, faster, simpler, more efficient and satisfying as a whole. Advertisers know this and are able to come up with new and exciting ways to provide the solutions. Hayek encompasses Galbraith's argument, by incorporating and expanding on the works of Galbraith and going one step further by describing what a want is. Hayek provides a more complete and logical answer to the morality of advertising, by emphasising its importance for the ongoing advancement of the human race (Borden & Schwartz, 1965). Because of the benefits of advertising, it is necessary for communication technologies and cyberpsychology to be studied and expanded upon. The current cyberpsychology landscape has not critically analysed or explained why trust has changed over time and further research needs to be conducted.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

The aforementioned archival research shows that marketers of the past relied on tangibility and familiarity to effectively build trust, but new technologies and consumer trends have opened up the opportunities for personalisation, instant gratification and consumer control over content. With these technological advancements, marketing campaigns have been able to measure the effectiveness of their marketing budget and determine where changes need to be made. These characteristics of a message have helped to build trust regardless of technological advancements: accessibility, familiarity, aesthetics, spontaneity, mode/ease of understanding, interactivity, functionality and peer validation. To confirm and build on these theories, experiments and studies were

performed to determine current consumer preferences across modern and traditional mediums as explained in the following section.

**Figure 2.1 - Building Your Traditional Message**





## Chapter 3

### Methodology

This section explains the methodology used to acquire new data for filling voids in the current understandings of cyberpsychology. For a topic like trust, that fluidly adjusts to societal shifts, it is unreasonable to take only one approach to single out new answers. The research began with comparing past works and theories with modern human tendencies. As disparities were uncovered, a survey was conducted to understand the general consensus on topics such as dating, online shopping, voicemails and business. The survey participants were all below the age of 30, they all owned smartphones and they completed the survey within a two week window. Some participants were selected for more in-depth interviews to answer questions on their personal relationship with technology. Additional unstructured interviews were conducted with internet marketing experts in-person and over the phone. This mixed-methods approach studied individual's preferences in an adaptive market and then applied the findings to a cyber experiment, which was then refined further.

In this research, the survey participants had limited knowledge on the ethics of advertisings and modern methods of measurement, although they are all highly experienced with modern technology, and as millennials, they have strong emotional ties to their personal devices and online identities. The research in this paper asked personal questions to students influenced by digital marketing and relates the findings to past theories of trust-building and decision-making. Additionally, the interviews with industry experts provided a comprehensive understanding of modern media and the cyber experiment was then designed to test the findings. These semi-structured interviews were

initiated to get valuable insight on controversial topics from industry leaders as explained in the Findings section below. Interviewees were selected because of their reputation and respect in the field of advertising and theories of human decision-making. Additional interviews were conducted throughout this study and quotes from modern consumers have been analysed and detailed below. The future is open for researchers to dive deeper into each aspect of the human decision-making process and to study the ability for advertising to foster trust and build relationships at scale.

### **Archival Research**

As examined above, past research has explained many factors for building trust in mass messaging, but with new technological advancements every day the landscape will change once again. The summary of archival research includes details about the original purpose and formation of traditional trust-building strategies, as well as their expected success across today's mediums. The Literature Review and past research was conducted before these surveys, interviews and experiments were finalised. With thorough analysis and comparison, the new findings outlined in this paper can be used by future marketers and psychologists to better understand the human decision-making process and scalable relationship building.

### **Digital Marketing**

Digital marketing research has made a strong introduction into scientific journals in the last twenty years and has been defined and studied in both qualitative and quantitative ways (Carnegie & Associates, 2011). The most complete overview of societal quantitative data comes directly from the industry leaders like Facebook, Google and Apple. These industry leaders have access to all the data being used on their platforms and it is their goal to educate their users how best to use their platform. The insight provided by these

industry leaders is more comprehensive and accurate than academic papers which only use smaller sample sizes and the limited data provided to them.

### **Technology Relationship Survey**

On a university campus in Auckland, New Zealand, 54 tech-savvy millennials were asked about their personal relationships with technology. Each of the questions had multiple choice answers and the participant was asked to rank from most-likely to least-likely in order to determine the wants of today's consumers (Appendix 1.1). The participants were anonymously surveyed using Google Web Forms and they also had the ability to note their opinions beyond the multiple choice bubbles. The survey allowed these future leaders to choose from traditional methods of communications, like writing a letter, or modern channels like a social media message. They were asked how their friends acted in public settings and what concerns they had about their daily routines. The questions provided a narrow window for interpretation of their answers by removing extraneous variables. The findings have been compared, contrasted and displayed in tables in the Findings section.

### **Cyber Experiment**

To test the findings in a commercial setting, a brief business plan was developed and executed around an opportunity within New Zealand. The experiment was designed to determine if the survey and interview findings were all encompassing and provided the most comprehensive solution for businesspeople at the time. To improve the success of the experiment, all aspects of human centred design and trust-building factors were integrated into one automated marketing platform.

The experiment was conducted with the local marketing department of a global real estate organisation between October 2017 and January 2018. A multi-channel marketing platform was developed and capable of posting content on behalf of the company's associates across each of their social media channels. The result lead to increased exposure for each associate by launching an online presence that will last forever. Traditional methods such as newspaper ads or magazine sponsorships can only be found for a short period of time, unlike these digital methods that will be online forever. The participants knew that they could always leverage the digital communications put forth in the experiment and their future clients will always be able to see how the participant has been involved with social media marketing and online advertising. The marketing department was able to amplify the reach of their content by leveraging the sales associates and their personal social media channels.

**Accessibility:** Each agent would launch a website that explained their business and services. Each agent would launch a Facebook Business page and LinkedIn page so they could be discovered across social media channels.

**Aesthetics:** Each agent website would be visually appealing and engaging and built with all aspects of Human-Centred Design to impress clients and web visitors.

**Functionality:** Each agent website would allow web visitors to quickly navigate through real estate listings, real estate news and agent details from their phone or computer.

**Peer Validation:** Each agent must connect and engage with other agent's LinkedIn and Facebook Business page so that their social media posts get likes and comments.

**Interactivity:** Each agent's website and social media will be related and interconnected so that web visitors and clients can easily bounce between platforms while remaining within the agent's online presence.

**Spontaneity:** Each agent's website and social media will feature a variety of content including local listings, global listings, local news, global news and more so that web visitors and social media followers are provided with a harmonious blend of relevant information and captivating imagery throughout the week.

**Familiarity:** Each agent's website and social media will have the same branding and style. Their online presence will always be consistent and reliable based on brand preferences, content and consistency over time.

**Frequency:** Each agent's website will update with new content every day to keep search engines and visitors coming back. Each social media page will update at least 3 times per week and email updates will be sent to the agent 1 time per week.

**Channels and Mediums:** Each agent will have a comprehensive and interconnected online presence that crosses screens and platforms.

These solutions were presented to the management and the development team created a fluid user experience that allowed each agent to quickly create a website. Each agent's website created their personalised marketing and connected their social networks. The property details were conveyed in a way that kept the existing brand content, personalised to the agent, with functionality for the user to control their next move. With all of the trust-building factors in place, the experiment still created issues among

management and our findings from the survey and interviews were able explain where the issue lied. To rectify the issue, a new version of the marketing platform was launched and the experiment was much more successful. The experiment was formally concluded in January of 2018 when the marketing department decided the platform was commercially viable and ready to roll out to additional sales associates.

To view more details regarding this automated marketing platform and recent experiments visit the website <https://ex.plo.re>.

## **Summary of Methodology**

A mixed-methods approach is used throughout this paper to comprehensively explain traditional methods and contribute new new findings on consumer preferences. The survey and interview results have been summarised in **Tables 6.1** to **6.5** in the next chapter and the complete list of survey questions can be found in **Appendix 1.1**.

The study has been designed to uncover interpersonal preferences across modern channels. The experiment and guided interviews were conducted across a wide variety demographics to ensure global accuracy. Traditional understandings of trust-building have been analysed above, summarised and expanded upon to include the latest consumer expectations through modern communication technologies. Upon analysis and comparison of this data and insight, the cyber-experiment was the most effective aspect in determining which factors are most important. The relevancy of data and findings was not for academic purposes alone and the feedback came directly from paying clients. They were able to voice their opinions based on the technology being implemented in their business and it has drastically improved the ability for this research to uncover today's truths in relationship building. The psychological findings below can be integrated

into daily conversations, marketing campaigns and organisational structure in order to create an enjoyable and trustworthy environment for all parties including consumers, sales associates, regional managers and global marketing teams.

## Chapter 4

### Findings

Building trust has changed over time and the research conducted shows that people used to trust the author of a message and it's publisher, but now people trust their devices and care more about immediate answers. The findings show that trust still comes from building relationships, but the delivery of messages has changed significantly. Since the user has the ability to interact with a message more than ever before, communicators must provide the receiver with control, instant gratification and personalisation while keeping them entertained throughout the process. To get a user to engage with a message, it must immediately satisfy their desire to explore.

When considering the source of information, people still choose to put their trust into another person as opposed to a company or brand. This has been successful over time across traditional and modern methods, including a newspaper showing the author of each article and a LinkedIn post showing the face of the individual doing the posting. Now the landscape has changed and these factors have shown to be the most powerful trust builders in a message: control, instant gratification, entertainment and personalisation. A brief summary of each is provided below, followed by more detail to explain the discoveries.



## **Control**

Users can control their favourite programs, bookmark their preferred websites, follow their local influencers and more. Their personally owned technology has become a handy and trusted resource in satisfying their desires.

## **Instant Gratification**

Their device provides them with immediate results, or at least the ability to search on request. This desire for instant gratification has made it easier for plans to be cancelled and new opportunities to be discovered. Friends can find their friends immediately via GPS tracking apps, which provide valuable information about someone they love and trust.

## **Entertainment**

The physical enjoyment makes a user crave the effects of handheld devices. With ultra-high definition, technicolour displays, the ability to sail away in paradise can be actualised by searching YouTube. When unlocking achievements and beating high scores in a game, smartphones smoothly vibrate and sing joyful songs which become familiar in just one sitting. Other physical senses can be targeted by syncing audio, video and vibration. Immersion is achieved when distractions are removed.

## **Personalisation**

Scalable technologies allow messages to be tailored and customised to their recipient. There is inherent trust when opening a hand-written letter addressed to you. The current technology landscape provides more personalisation than a hand-written letter by knowing your current location, past desires and friend's activity. Users can easily open

their smartphone and access a world personalised to them, only showing their friends and only showing videos they like. All of this is made possible through the advancement of communication technologies which will continue to evolve.

### **Outcome of the Experiment**

As mentioned in the previous section, all factors from the Literature Review were integrated into the cyber experiment, yet issues still surfaced. After thorough analysis and discussion the factors listed above in Findings were more important and needed to be considered. To effectively build a trustworthy platform, the sales associates needed to feel ownership, they needed pride and they needed it now!

To resolve the concerns, another layer was added into the automated marketing platform. This layer provided enhanced abilities to the sales associate, more personalisation for their clients and more control for the brand's marketing department.

### **Interview Findings**

Observations and interviews have been a crucial element in understanding the current status of the cyberpsychology field. The following topics and quotes were collected from interviewees and have been addressed in context. Each subsection relates back to the interviewee's understanding of their own interactions with technology. The following conversations naturally flowed to the subjects of User Experience, Business Development, Shopping, Simplicity, Finding the Truth and Dating as related to technology.

After the interview subsections, a summary of the survey is provided and tables to explain the findings. The preferences chosen among survey participants show that they are more likely to engage, trust and interact with a message that feels personalised, gives them

control and is available immediately. Below are the findings from interviews organised in various categories.

## **User Experience**

When discussing a new website with the CEO of a leading technology company in Auckland, New Zealand, the interviewee states that “user experience can be improved by removing page functionality”. This was highlighted above by Karmokar’s explanation of human-centred design and the user’s intellectual capabilities and limitations. Instead of providing a navigation menu with dozens of options, messages can be delivered in a way that provide a few high level options and upon further exploration the user can achieve their goals. In most cases, the user’s goals also align with the advertiser’s goals and can be tracked as ROI.

## **Business Development**

As consumer industries integrate new technology, commercial markets are following closely behind. An interview with one of Auckland’s top commercial real estate agents showed how the interviewee has leveraged technology to improve business services and client satisfaction. The interviewee has been featured in newspaper articles and advises colleagues on their websites and social media presence: “You have to provide a benefit, service or video” (NZ Herald, 2018). The participant affirms that digital tools allow businesspeople to provide their service at scale to anyone in the world at every second. The participant stated that most industries have adopted new tools to improve their service and the interviewee is confident that commercial real estate agents will continue to adapt as new trust-building tools become readily available.

## **Shopping**

The relationship between businesses and consumers has changed as well. An Oakland, California resident was asked about their feelings toward online shopping and simply answered: “Amazon is life”. The simplicity of a centralised shopping website has revolutionised the shopping experience by providing all options from the comfort of one's own home. The survey results, below, show that all participants prefer to do research online before making a purchase.

“If I’m buying an oven or refrigerator, I would definitely check the prices online before walking into a store. It’s easy as to pick it up or get it delivered if I like it” says a young homeowner from Paparoa, New Zealand. This homeowner goes on to say that “when [he] was looking for a place to rent [he] would get on a Facebook group to check out the flatmates first.” The social media platforms currently available have provided a personalised experience for him to immediately learn more and make the best decision possible. These abilities are new to the market and were not an option for the last generation of homebuyers and tenants.

## **Simplicity is Key**

A resident of Manhattan, New York, says that online portals make his life easier because there are less people involved. For example, no lines or middlemen to deal with and he says that he “always books flights online and renews [his] driver’s licence online” instead of calling the office or meeting with a representative.

## **Collecting Things**

Despite it’s ability to simplify, some individuals feel that the digital world can still cause the stress and chaos that the physical world creates. A business owner in South Lake

Tahoe, California suggests that “it is important to organise and declutter, like removing unnecessary apps or old bluetooth devices from your phone.” This interviewee emphasised the value of a smooth user experience and has leveraged that knowledge to provide simplicity and organisation in his life and trade.

## **Finding The Truth**

The title of this paper and a few words that resonate with all millennials, a traveler didn’t believe her trusted friends when discussing the rules of a card game in Wanaka, New Zealand. She said “I’ll look it up anyways” and decided to find the rules of the game online in order to prove herself right and her friends wrong. It turns out that the first answer she found was in favour of her argument. Although, shortly after her Google search from her iPhone, she found another article that was not in support of her argument. This ties into the dangers of a Filter Bubble, where consumers are only able to find information that Google believes the consumer wants to find (Pariser, 2011). Consumers can get trapped in a Filter Bubble when they only have access to personalised results. This could perpetuate an individuals beliefs instead of providing relevant, unbiased info.

## **Dating**

While traveling through the quiet and lonely town of Napier, New Zealand, a backpacker stated that he uses “social dating apps as soon as [he lands] in a new area. [He marks his] territory like a wolf.” This quote demonstrates the new capabilities that youth are utilising to meet their neighbours and peers. In this example, the social dating app, Tinder, was the centre of discussion. Tinder finds the user’s location to suggest new partners in the area. The backpacker knew that he had to tell the Tinder app his new location before he could start using it’s platform and receive personalised results.

## **Survey Results and Findings**

Participants were asked in an anonymous survey to determine how their friends would most likely interact with technology. All survey questions can be found in Appendix 1.1 below. The six questions prompted millennials to discuss their thoughts on getting the local news, connecting with friends, seeking help with a recipe, real-life interactions, daily frights and shopping.

The results of the survey show that unlike traditional models, which relied on tangibility and familiarity, these participants prefer immediate sources of information that provide personalised results. Technology has shifted the traditional methods of trust-building and peer-to peer-communication by satisfying the desires of instant gratification, the ability to control a message and the personalised benefits of online profiles.

The survey also shows that unlike traditional models with face-to-face meetings, digital communication has proven to be a preferred method among the youth and future business leaders. Today's technology eases communication barriers and reduces risk for all participants. Below is a summary of the findings based on participant responses to each question:

### **6.1 - Getting the Local News**

Participants were asked which mode they preferred to get local, national and global news. Each mode was assigned a specific level of control, immediacy and ability to personalise. The table below shows that when a participant uses their phone or computer to receive news they have the ability to control which news source they look at, unlike a newspaper which combines all news from one source or TV which only has a limited number of channels to choose from. The factor of immediacy is dependent on the user's ability to

get the news at the time of their choosing. Since they always have their phone or computer they can choose to get the news at any time, unlike TV which might not be showing the news at the time or newspapers which may be difficult to find depending on the location and time of day. The next factor shows the personalisation of the news received and considers what information is shown to that specific individual.

Mode	Control	Immediacy	Personalisation
Phone/Computer	High	High	High
Newspaper	Low	Low	Low
TV	Medium	Low	Low

When learning about the local news, participants preferred to use a phone or computer, which affords them the ability to control which articles they click on. A personal phone or computer satisfies the desire for immediacy because individuals can find information at any time from anywhere. They also will have personalised information while reading the news because their device will be recognised by location, past behaviour and more.

A newspaper provides a low level of control and once a participant holds a newspaper, it becomes their only source of information. They can choose to skip a page, but otherwise the newspaper provides very limited flexibility and control. A newspaper does not fulfil the desire for instant gratification and a participant must find or buy today's newspaper before they can even access the news. A newspaper is only personalised to represent the region and does not consider any additional factors about the reader, therefore unable to provide the same benefits as a digital screen.

In an urban area, there may be multiple TV channels to choose from, which provides an increased amount of control for the viewer, although a TV is not easily transported so it is slightly more difficult to satisfy the desire for instant gratification. The local news on a TV does not take additional factors into account to provide personalised experiences for the

viewer and similar to the newspaper, it broadly provides regional news to a wide spectrum of demographics.

## 6.2 - Connecting with Friends

Mode	Control	Immediacy	Personalisation
Phone Call	Low	Medium	High
Email	High	Medium	High
Text Message	High	High	High
In-App Direct Message	High	High	High

Participants were asked how they prefer to communicate with trusted friends:

In this question, the control variable represents the ability for a friend to control an outbound message. When calling a friend, participants are unable to fully plan ahead with their message and they have to communicate in real-time. Conversely, when sending a message via app, text or email, the sender can read their message and check it twice before actually communicating. Participants prefer to communicate with friends via text message or in-app direct message because it seamlessly integrates in with their environment and provides a layer of quality control.

The immediacy for all of these mediums is fairly high, although the friend must be able to read and respond to the message easily while continuing with their day-to-day life. With a phone call, there are additional factors that negatively effect the satisfaction of instant gratification. For example, both parties need to be in a quiet environment so that they can hear each other without causing interruptions to their surrounding environment.

According to participants and archival research, an email is not checked as frequently as text messages so the immediacy of an email is not as high as text and in-app messages.



The easiest, least intrusive and most accessible method of communication among friends is via text message or in-app direct messages. Both parties can participate in a wide range of physical environments and they have a high level of control, immediacy and personalisation.

### 6.3 - Help with a Recipe

Mode	Control	Immediacy	Personalisation
Online Search	High	High	High
Phone Call	Low	Medium	High
Read a Cookbook	Low	Low	Low
Watch YouTube Video	High	High	Low

Participants were asked how their friends would react if they needed answers to a recipe: When asked about seeking their own information, participants unanimously chose to search online. In their comments, participants would start with a Google search and hope to find a video to explain their desired recipe.

This emphasises the desire for instant gratification because a cookbook may not be accessible and even when the chef has the cookbook in their hands, it can take additional time to find the right recipe. Personalisation is extremely low in a cookbook and if the recipe doesn't fulfil the chef's desires, skillset or ingredients the whole cookbook is useless to that individual at the time.

When polling participants, not one individual chose to make a phone call when figuring out a recipe, they would rather find the information themselves and avoid other distractions that could be created by the phone call. This is caused by the lack of control in a phone call, which could lead to fifteen minutes of explaining the ingredients, dinner plans, family updates, results of sports games and other unforeseen variables.

With a simple Google search, chefs are able to quickly find the perfect recipes at home without distractions and they can adjust the meal to their specifications.

#### 6.4 - Alone in Public

Participants were asked how their friends would react in public if they were seated alone in a cafe. This question was designed to isolate the societal effects of personal devices. In summary, the question asked if their friends would sit quietly and observe their environment or if they would immediately pull out their smartphone in order to communicate with someone.

Mode	Control	Immediacy	Personalisation
Phone	High	High	High
Conversation	Low	Low	High
Share Photo/Video	High	High	High
Observe Environment	High	Low	Low

When analysing the participant responses it is clear that digital communication is preferred over real life conversations or sitting idle. This can be explained by the high risk in real life conversations, which provide a low level of control to both parties. The approach into a real life conversation can also take time and the environmental factors can vary, so immediacy and instant gratification is low.

Some participants believe that their friends would start by observing their environment but eventually pull out their phone. This is explained by the desire for instant gratification that the real world cannot always provide at a satisfactory level.

It is easier for an individual to pull out their phone to immediately stimulate their brain. The individual has complete control over the content they choose and it is personalised for them. Once their smart phone is out, many participants would opt for sending a photo or video to communicate with a friend.

### **Day-to-Day Frights**

Participants were asked which event is more traumatising, losing a cell phone or leaving the house?

Across the board, all participants were more concerned about losing their cell phone over leaving the house. This is contrary to traditional understandings mentioned in Maslow's Hierarchy. Since shelter and security are assumed to be present in each participant's life, they were more concerned about losing touch with the World Wide Web and their social media networks. Additional comments were made that could void the question, as "losing a phone" is the only answer that could result in a financial loss. Future research needs to mitigate the cost associated with each, for example, "phone battery dies" instead of completely losing a \$1,000 smart phone.

Participants also stated that receiving a phone call is intimidating since it creates a low level of control. In comparison, participants felt more fear was generated when "leaving a voicemail" than having a phone conversation. Although the individual leaving a voicemail can secure a detailed and personalised message, that individual has little control and they are forced to communicate in real-time with a recording device. They also know that their message will not be answered immediately so the perceived value of the voicemail is low due to lack of instant gratification.

## 6.5 - Shopping

Today's shoppers want to see all their options, prices, colours and sizes with ease (Yim & Kwon, 2014). Most storefronts and retail outlets do not have their full inventory on the shelves and they cannot provide the range of options that an e-commerce site can. In-store shopping, compared to online shopping, has a very low level of control and personalisation. Although, within that range of control and products in-store, the desire for instant gratification can be satisfied immediately if the product is within reach.

Mode	Control	Immediacy	Personalisation
Online	High	High	High
Magazine	Low	Low	Low
In Store	Low	High	Low

A clothing magazine provides the least benefit because the only way to interact with the product is through a static image on a page, the shopper is unable to touch and feel the product or flip through different sizes, colours and shapes so personalisation is low, instant gratification does not exist in a magazine and the shopper has no control over content. As shown in the various events in the survey, human-technology interaction differs across industries, perspectives and desires.

### Summary of Findings

Gone are the days of tangibility and familiarity, consumers now rely on convenience and immediacy in their decision making process. Consumers are now seeking out their own information, as opposed to past theories that relied on creating the introduction like Ogilvy's in-person introductions. Consumers now know that they can search for themselves and they will make decisions strictly based on the digital information they can find at the time. Although in social scenarios, friends are more likely to connect with friends through methods that provide the sender with control over the communication,

even if immediacy must be sacrificed due to longer response times.

Marketplaces have become easier to access, but the introduction to a product comes with more predisposition and competition than ever. Consumers have already found their own information and they may believe that a product is too expensive while in the store. These predispositions can be considered and used to benefit the advertiser's message through sales, specials and promotions in targeted markets. When learning something new, like a recipe, people prefer to watch a video as opposed to hearing from an expert. The simple thought of seeing a video motivates people to click because they believe it will instantly satisfy their specific desires (Houston, 2015). Ogilvy stated that referrals from friends are stronger than unsolicited advertisements and this explains why a Facebook campaign can have more success than a targeted ad or radio ad. Social media is the digital version of word-of-mouth referrals. For example, the introduction to a music event will resonate much more if it is an actual invite from a friend as opposed to a sponsored ad from the event's host.

After translating traditional trust-building models into a digital marketing campaign, the most effective method of building trust is a combination of all human-centred design elements in immediate succession. For example, a friend of yours shares a video on Facebook. The quick video is a personal introduction to your local weatherman and he quickly conveys his passion and knowledge about the weather. This secures a solid first impression and provides a face for you to relate to. The curious weatherman asks your location so that he can provide you with personalised information immediately.

After that, you should be reminded of the weatherman through regular interactions, such as non-intrusive, relevant, social media posts that have already been liked by your friends. When you choose to engage with the weatherman you should be happy with the

experience and functionality provided to you, such as website design and responsiveness. Moving forward, you should gently be reminded of the benefits provided by the weatherman and you should be given an easy route to explore the weather.

This gentle reminder can be made possible with relevant and non-intrusive digital advertisements that remind you of your prior engagements. Again, you should be happy with the services immediately provided to you and have the ability to get more involved by subscribing to email updates or following the weatherman on social media. By publicly sharing your feedback and introducing your friends to the weatherman you have now built an affinity and you feel proud to have enlightened your friends of the weatherman's knowledge and passion. You have taken control, personalised your information and now you have a trusted resource for the weather around you right now.

One major difference between Ogilvy's message and the weatherman example is the scalability and opportunity for instant gratification to the masses. Where Ogilvy was one man introducing a product, the weatherman can be a digital, replicable and scalable to provide a personal feel for each user at the perfect time.

The research and results show that face-to-face interaction is important because it allows individuals to pick up someone's body language and understand their message. Physical interactions and in-person eye contact cannot be replaced by a smartphone or the video conferencing methods available today. People still trust face-to-face conversations, but selfie videos and personal intro videos can be considered the closest substitute to an authentic one-on-one conversation.

While knowledge is power, immediate knowledge makes decisions. Facebook Messenger always tells users when their message has been delivered and seen. Instagram, wholly-

owned by Facebook, recently started telling friends about the “latest activity” and the last time each friend was online using Instagram. This provides personalised, real-time information so that users feel they have greater control while interacting with the platform.

Advertisers can further expand on the desire for instant gratification by not only providing the consumer with immediate satisfaction, but by leveraging immediacy in their marketing campaigns. New strategies will continue to be drawn from human tendencies to compare and desire products. With these new digital mediums it is easier for consumers to see their potential life in real-time. For example, a boy sitting at home on Saturday afternoon could receive an inviting photo from the beach. The boy will immediately look at his surroundings and most likely desire the beach instead. If the boy had received the photo at night or on a rainy day it would not be as relevant nor effective in swaying his decision. With the ease of communication and personalisation, advertisers can easily deliver relevant messages to the right people at the right time.

Advertisers can employ similar strategies by targeting a mother at breakfast time while she is connected to her home wi-fi. The advertiser can generate envy by showing her a nicer home, with newer appliances, more natural light and better views from the window. An advertising campaign like this could be implemented by a cabinet company, countertop installer, kitchen remodellers, real estate agents and more. The findings in this study show the importance of immediacy in the human decision making process.

Like all other experiences, the face-to-face interactions could potentially be replaced by technology in the future. With the advancement of direct video calls, virtual reality, 3-D environments and holograms, marketers are on track to digitise the human interactions of Ogilvy’s door-knocking techniques and brand communication.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

Today's consumers make decisions by interacting with technology. They are able to find complex solutions without relying on direct human contact or expert involvement. This creates an opportunity for advertisers to position their message as the solution to consumer's needs. Messages can be tailored to be more effective than ever before and allow advertisers to quickly become trusted by the entire community.

Although the internet has the ability to automate personal relationships it has not devastated society's interpersonal communication skills. The findings shows that communication preferences have changed but the actual desire to interact has not diminished. The consumer's likeliness to trust the first search result is a recent phenomenon. It shows that traditional understandings of building trust are no longer applicable and new methods must be determined. Consumers have grown to trust their devices, their search engine and, therefore, the first search result. With the user's ability to explore and interact, an advertiser's message must be positioned as an easy step in the right direction.

The findings show that consumers trust and engage with messages if they have immediate control and only see relevant, personalised data. All aforementioned factors must be included when designing a message, especially HCD which reduces cognitive load to make a message easier to understand and more tempting to spend time with. One major difference of Ogilvy's marketing strategy is the prospect's full immersion in the marketing experience and message. Ogilvy relied on personal conversations in the prospect's kitchen and a firm handshake, eye contact and a professional demeanour



cannot be replicated through a two-dimensional screen. Technologists know that full immersion is one of the next hurdles in digital communication and future marketers will have the ability to craft a 3-D experience that can feel real. Disney has already created immersive experiences at their theme parks, going beyond sight and sound and including adrenaline-pumping thrill rides and crave-causing scents of buttered popcorn (Yanagida, Kawato, Noma, Tomono, & Tesutani, 2004). This real world Disney experience is actually a finely crafted message by the designers at Disney and their methods to build trust and engagement have been highly successful and refined over decades.

Future research will show that more human senses can be encompassed into user experience, which means body and mind both need to be stimulated. Although it is difficult to dream of a world where a smartphone can pump out scents or satisfy the taste buds, it should be understood by artists and designers when they consider the preferences of their clients, employees and peers.

Effective advertising can be viewed as the mind going from one place to the next seamlessly and future marketers can view the user experience to be a mode of transportation. To get a better understanding of transportation and experiential marketing, future UX designers should understand the benefits of flying first-class and the behind-the-scenes systems that create a luxurious experience on an individual level. When creating a new application or sending a message to a consumer, the findings show that reduction of cognitive load will be a key factor in a message's effectiveness. Future designers and advertisers should follow the leader when designing their message. Instead of creating new systems, today's advertisers should replicate the functionalities of Facebook and Instagram because most of their target market already knows how to interact with these platforms, which will reduce the learning curve and cognitive load of

their intended audience. Advertiser's should anticipate the next move of their users and photo galleries should auto-scroll and provide a visual countdown so that the user knows the next photo is on its way. Auto-scrolling functionalities can allow users to see all photos without having to tap, click, swipe or react at all. This push towards simplicity will increase the effectiveness of a message and consumers will choose to trust and engage because the advertiser is completely entertaining.

Other factors to be considered by consumers and advertisers alike, is their own relationship with technology. Smartphone users must maintain their sanity by deciding who has control, the phone or the user? By starting the day in airplane mode, a user can regain control of their morning by deciding when and where to receive outside information. It is not the user's responsibility to always be accessible, instead the smartphone just provides the benefit of accessibility when the user sees fit.

This paper began with an explanation of communication technologies being used by advertising agencies and communication managers in 2019. Each aspect of advertising was defined in the literature review which honed in on the evolving aspects of interpersonal communication. The findings show that traditional methods of building a message are still applicable because they contribute to user satisfaction, although additional cyberpsychology factors can increase trust and engagement.

The research identified and exposed the changes in consumer preferences through survey questions relating to human-technology interaction. The findings across all data collection methods highlighted the importance of personalisation, instant gratification and control for effective communication and trust-building strategies in today's marketplace. These three factors must be blended in a way that entertains the user while effectively

delivering a message. The most trusted applications can be designed as tools for the user. These tools provide the user with an immediate resource they can trust, like a torch in the dark or a request for help. The cyberpsychology field has unique capabilities to expose unforeseen human instincts and shift decision-making processes. As technology continues to evolve and consumer demands change, future research will uncover essential human characteristics that traditionally had been overlooked by researchers.

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# Appendix

## 1.1 Survey Questions

**1. When my friends hear about the local news, they are most likely:**

- Holding a newspaper
- Using a smartphone
- On a computer
- Watching TV

**2. When making plans, my friends would most likely:**

- Call me
- Email me
- Text me
- DM me (FB Messenger, SnapChat, Instagram, WhatsApp)

**3. When looking for an answer to a recipe, my friends would most likely:**

- Google it
- Call an advisor
- Read a cookbook
- Watch a Youtube video

**4. When sitting alone in a cafe, my friends would most likely:**

- Look at their phone
- Approach a new person
- Observe their surroundings
- Take a video or photo to share

**5. My friends are most frightened when they: (Rank in Order)**

- Leave the house
- Lose their phone
- Receive a phone call
- Leave a voicemail

**6. My friends are most likely to buy nice sunglasses:**

- Online
- Magazine
- In store