Design and Usability of Social Networking Web Sites

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Abstract

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This study began by designing the layout of a new social networking Web site and putting it to practical use. A team of computer science students at Cal Poly developed this social networking site for their senior project, and called it *Friend Riot*. The new and innovative features that *Friend Riot* consists of set it apart from other popular social networking Web sites, but its interface was lacking a good design. When the new design was implemented, it was tested against the competition: *Facebook*, *MySpace*, and *YouTube*.

The purpose of this study is to determine the effects that Web design and usability have on social networking Web sites. Web design involves the colors, look and feel, and how the site is organized, while usability measures how easily users can navigate through a Web site. There were two tests that were done in this study corresponding with design and usability—a survey and usability test. The survey revealed the current most popular social networking sites, and the usability test quantified the ease of use that these Web sites provide.

The usability of a Web site can be determined by many factors, such as the location the navigation, the contrast between colors, how certain items are made visible, and many others. These are also factors that determine the design of the Web site, therefore usability and design work together. To achieve maximum customer satisfaction, a developer must not only design the site to be unique, but must also follow conventions that decrease the time users spend learning how the Web site works. This study examines the differences and similarities between social networking Web sites, and assess the potential success that *Friend Riot* has in the social networking world.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

It is becoming an increasingly popular trend to be a member of a social networking Web site today, primarily because of the opportunity to create better relationships with people. The popular sites today include *Facebook*, *MySpace*, *Twitter*, and *YouTube*, to name a few. Individually, they have their own purpose in the world of social networking, but collectively they have something in common, and that is a well-designed and easy-to-use interface. The social networking Web sites of today have gained popularity not only because of the many interactive and innovative features, but also because the site's purpose is clearly established and the audience is targeted effectively. The purpose of this study is to verify how the graphic design and usability of social networking Web sites affect how many members they acquire. The design and ease of use of a social networking site can affect the number of people who become members of it because studies have shown that users will leave a Web site either because it is unattractive or difficult to use. A well-built and aesthetically attractive social networking site, on the other hand, will gain members more quickly because it will allow users to carry out social tasks more easily.

A common way to test the effectiveness of a Web site's layout, architecture, and design is through usability tests. A usability test involves examining how users scan pages, what links are clicked on most often, and how users navigate throughout a site's menu system. Some sites have little or no design features, and are built primarily upon usability. A site like *Craigslist*, for example, is a highly used Web site for its usefulness rather than its aesthetic appeal. A site like *MySpace*, however, is built heavily upon superfluous graphics that can distract users from the content. Content is one of the most important aspects of the Web, and what is more important than the content itself is being able to find it. When a user can navigate a Web site without having to think, it builds confidence and a trust in the Web site that will cause him or her to keep coming back to it. An effective Web site will achieve maximum user satisfaction when there is a balance between graphically appealing qualities and ease of use.

Web accessibility is something that a Web designer must also consider when creating an interface because a Web site must be able to be used by a variety of people in order to

be successful. Making a Web site accessible is the practice of creating content and styles in a way that suits all types of ages, demographics, and abilities, so that everyone using the Web has the same experience. Although Web accessibility caters mainly to disabled persons, its significance lies in how the customers will use the site, rather than how the designer wants the site to look. Web accessibility plays an important role in usability because it causes designers to consider those who are less experienced and less physically able to use the Web. A site that makes it easy to complete tasks for all users will succeed in gaining the popularity it wishes to achieve.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Designing a Web site is not limited to simply creating the look and feel of the interface. It also entails the organization of the content and user experience. The graphic designer is responsible for presenting the material on a Web site in a clear, focused, and aesthetically pleasing way. This role often requires the graphic designer to become involved in making sure users can access the site easily. Web accessibility means that "people with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with the Web, and that they can contribute to the Web" (Henry). A usable Web site is one in which the content can be found and read easily by means of a clear and simple navigation. Accessibility and usability are both key components of Web site design because they can affect the location of certain elements on a page, and also which elements are essential to the overall look and feel. Usability is important everywhere on the Web, but the nature of a social network's operation makes usability especially important (Ho).

Usability First is an online resource that identifies the important aspects of creating an effective Web site, and it provides evidence of how users have responded to different Web sites through usability testing. The primary point of usability testing is to provide feedback during the design and development process to ensure that the Web site will actually be easy and effective to use and provide valuable information to the users. Four primary elements that are measured are the ease and effectiveness of navigation, usefulness of content, effectiveness of presentation, and task success rate (TeamWeb). Task success rate refers to the time it takes for a user find what he or she is looking for. Usability First states that Web design goes beyond aesthetics, and instead serves as a means of establishing integrity:

> While beautiful, impressive, and compelling design is important for a variety of reasons (including creating brand identity, entertaining and drawing people in, and establishing credibility) design choices need to be weighed against meeting the user's needs in order for a site to achieve its goal (Foraker Design).

Vitaly Friedman, editor-in-chief of an online magazine dedicated to designers and developers called Smashing Magazine, agrees that the most effective Web sites concentrate

the design aspects toward how a user navigates a site:

> Usability and the utility, not the visual design, determine the success or failure of a Web site. Since the visitor of the page is the only person who clicks the mouse and therefore decides everything, user-centric design has become a standard approach for successful and profit-oriented Web design. After all, if users cannot use a feature, it might as well not exist (Friedman).

Web site designers will often aim to create a design that is unique, while disregarding whether the site is actually usable.

> Bleeding-edge designers and simplicity gurus do not often see eye-to-eye when it comes to Web site design. A Web site may make perfect sense to the developer, but a design that is focused on bells and whistles can turn users away (Foraker Design).

The term "bleeding-edge" refers to "extremely advanced technology with no current practical application," and is "usually experimental and risky" (Dictionary.com). Web site designers have a tendency to create unique designs to impress users, but neglect the actual functionality and usability. Unlike software, Web sites have the ability to be customized by their Web designers. For this reason, Web designers should create an interface that best meets the needs of its users.

> When people were more committed to learning software due to expense and limited choices, they were forced to adapt to poorly designed user-interfaces. But on the Internet, choice is the users' ballot, and their votes can be costly (Foraker Design).

User testing is important because of the direct relationship it can have with a site's success. Because graphic designers can get caught up in how certain elements appear to them, it can be wise to "keep it simple":

> The "keep it simple" principle (KIS) should be the primary goal of site design. Users are rarely on a site to enjoy the design; furthermore, in most cases they are looking for the information despite the design (Friedman).

Friedman also makes the point that some elements of a Web site go completely unnoticed because users scan instead of reading. While analyzing a Web page, users search for some

fixed points or anchors that would guide them through the content of the page (Friedman).

> Visitors glance at each new page, scan some of the text, and click on the first link that catches their interest or vaguely resembles what they are looking for. In fact, there are large parts of the page they do not even look at. Most users search for something interesting (or useful) and clickable; as soon as some promising candidates are found, users click. If the new page does not meet users' expectations, the Back button is clicked and the search process is continued (Friedman).

The Back button is a feature built in to all Web browsers that allows users to return the previously viewed page. Even though the Back button is "the second-most used navigation feature" (Nielson), using it often can indicate that the navigation items within the Web site are ineffective. Jakob Nielsen, a Web usability expert, expands on the many Web site usage habits that people have, and relates it to capabilities of the human brain. Nielsen notes that it is difficult for the brain to retain large amounts of information, and believes "the human brain today is the same as the human brain 10,000 years ago" (Nielson). On a more specific and quantified level, he states that:

> When it comes to abstract thinking, humans have extremely limited brainpower. For example, short-term memory famously holds only about 7 chunks of information, and these fade from your brain in about 20 seconds (Nielson).

In order to compensate for these limitations, special care must be taken to ensure the Web site is optimized for all users. Response times must be fast enough so that users do not forget what they were doing while waiting for the next page to load. Nielsen also states that only about 4 percent of the population has enough brainpower to perform complex cognitive tasks requiring high-level inferences using specialized background knowledge (Nielsen).

> The philosophy of minimizing the user's effort in finding content is the foundation of many Web site design conventions. Once a Web site is deemed to be user-friendly, other Web sites will follow the principles that make it effective. With conventions, a user's confidence, trust, and reliability are gained, boosting the site's credibility. It is best to follow users' expectations and to understand what they are expecting from a site's navigation, text structure, and search placement (Friedman).

> The Web is becoming a genre with its own established conventions. From a usability standpoint, it can be helpful to follow some of the design conventions that are being established by dominant Web sites as users are accustomed to seeing certain layouts and features on commerce sites, marketing sites, or informational sites (Foraker Design).

> There are some places where being unique and original can harm a Web site. A search box, a shopping cart, or a really simple syndication (RSS) link are examples where the Web site can benefit from following the common convention as the user will be able to identify them much more quickly. It is harder to measure the impact of doing this, but the idea is to allow the user to more easily identify these critical elements by labeling them what they'd expect it to be labeled, and placing them where they'd expect them to be placed (Ho).

Web accessibility promotes the ability of person with a disability to use a Web site as easily as a person without disability. The major disability types are blindness, low vision, color-blindness, hearing loss, deafness, inability to use a mouse, slow response time, limited fine motor control, learning disabilities, distractibility, and the inability to remember or focus on large amounts of information (WebAIM).

> Each disability requires certain types of adaptations in the design of the Web content. Most of the time, these adaptations benefit nearly everyone, not just people with disabilities. Almost everyone benefits from helpful illustrations, properly organized content and clear navigation. Similarly, while captions are a necessity for deaf users, they can be helpful to others, including anyone who views a video without audio (WebAIM).

Web accessibility should not be an after-thought; it should be integrated with the initial design of the Web site. When keeping accessibility and usability in mind during the design process, the end result is a site that is appealing to a wider audience.

Those with disabilities are not the only users that require a Web site to be flexible. Some users browse the Web with all graphics turned off. A page with more images will take longer to load, hindering the experience for those with slow Internet connections. Turning certain features off is used to prevent functions that may detract from a user's experience. For example, a user may disable a cascading style sheet (CSS), which is "a simple mechanism for adding style (e.g. fonts, colors, spacing) to Web documents" (W3C). Disabling CSS allows users to control

the styling to meet their needs, and used especially by the visually impaired. To successfully design an effective site, all possibilities of how the site will be used must be considered.

> While not everyone may want to follow such a drastic rule in all their designs, it is useful to remember that graphics can often be only supplementary to a Web site and should never get in the way of users. And remember, at least a million people out there are browsing without any graphics at all (Foraker Design).

> From the visitors' point of view, the best site design is a pure text, without any advertisements or further content blocks matching exactly the query visitors used or the content they have been looking for. This is one of the reasons why a user-friendly print-version of Web pages is essential for good user experience (Friedman).

Web usability expert, Jakob Nielson, conducted a survey of multiple design projects and found that, after redesigning for usability, the average improvement in key performance indicators (KPI) was 135 percent. The average business metrics improvement after a usability redesign is now 83 percent (Nielsen). His studies are based on data derived from a simple formula that factors in the amount of business done by the site (B), the number of unique visitors coming to the site (V), the conversion rate (C), and the loyalty rate (L): $B = V \times C \times L$. The conversion rate refers to the percentage of visitors who become customers after visiting the site for the first time, and the loyalty rate refers to the degree to which customers return to conduct repeat business (Nielsen). Nielson's studies have primarily focused on commerce Web sites, but the same rules apply for any Web site aiming to gain members, such as those for social networking.

Social networking sites function like an online community of Internet users, and depending on the Web site in question, many of these online community members share common interests in hobbies, religion, or politics (What is Social Networking?). They are based on a number of features that allow members to interact online, and provide an experience that makes them want to continue using it. When a person has a great experience with a Web site or Web service, it is because a design team made excellent decisions about both design and implementation—

decisions based on data about how people use designs (Chisnell). An experienced Web developer at Adobe comments on the difficulty of creating a powerful Web site:

> Creating a Web page is easy. Creating a site is easy. Everyone has access to tools that make authoring Web pages easy. The trick is no longer getting the page built. It is getting it built right, and then getting it looked at—again and again (Usability: The Key to Good Web Site Design).

Verne Ho is Web site designer who redesigned a social networking site called *Daily Challenge*, and believes that the rules of usability apply more so to social networking sites because activities and content are fully driven by the users. Users interact with the Web site, and users are expected to come back to the Web site periodically and continue to do tasks (Ho).

MySpace was one of the first social networking Web sites of its kind, but research has shown that *Facebook* is rapidly surpassing its popularity. In terms of the percentage of time spent on a site as a percentage of total time spent online, in early 2008 approximately 7 percent of all time spent online was on *MySpace*. Only 1.5 percent of the time spent online was on *Facebook*, but eventually *Facebook* gained more and more attention, eventually overtaking MySpace in October 2008. As of January 2009, 5 percent of all time spent online was on *Facebook*, more than double *MySpace* (Prebluda). The reason *Facebook* is preferred over *MySpace* is likely due to a cleaner user interface design, greater usability, and more reliability (Lucero). These aspects of Web design that *Facebook* has concentrated on have proven effective in gaining users; in the past two years, average stay for a visitor to *MySpace* has dropped from 30 minutes to 10 minutes. In the meantime, *Facebook* has steadily upped this number, and as of January 2009, *Facebook* kept visitors engaged on site over 7 minutes longer on average than *MySpace* (Prebluda).

Although graphic design on the Web is continually evolving, the way in which sites are used remains constant. Design does not refer to aesthetics alone as much as it refers to all aspects of the user experience. Site architecture, page layout, page design, features, colors, fonts, and accessibility are all part of design. Certain sites attract more users compared to rival sites because special attention on the developing side has been paid to usability and how well the content can be found. A site that is built for social networking will thus gain more users when optimized for maximum usability.

Chapter 3: Research Methods and Procedures

The purpose of this study is to determine how the design of a social networking Web site can affect its usability. Social networking Web sites should follow the rules and conventions of other successful Web sites in order to gain more members. Each social networking site aims to provide its members with a different way of connecting with friends and family, but many of them share similar features. For example, *MySpace* and *Facebook* members have their own profile that displays personal information and provides the tools in which they can share content. However, *MySpace* and *Facebook* were created with different purposes in mind, lending themselves to different interface designs. This study examined the ease of use of some of the popular social networking sites' interface and features. Their effectiveness was determined through descriptive research and content analysis by conducting a simple usability test and a survey. The survey was used for locating the most common social networking trends, and descriptive research is perfectly suitable for it because it will "identify the cause of something that is happening" (DJS Research Ltd). Content analysis "examines words or phrases within a wide range of texts" (Colorado State University), and thus provided the ability to analyze each Web site's success.

The new social networking Web site is called *Friend Riot*, and its primary function is to integrate with Web browsers to automatically share sites and bookmarks between those who become members of it. This study began by working alongside the developers of this social networking site to create the look and feel of its interface. These developers are students at Cal Poly, and have been constructing this social networking site for their senior project. The process of developing this Web site included gathering its content and basic features, and organizing them in way that effectively communicates its purpose and provides clear direction for completing tasks. The next step in the study was to compare *Friend Riot* to the other leading social networking sites.

Since many social networking sites share many similar features, it was the speed at which users completed certain tasks that was measured. Some examples of features that many social networking sites share include adding friends, updating profile information, uploading a profile

image, viewing a friend's profile, and logging out. In the usability test, three participants were assigned these tasks, and the time it took to complete them, in seconds, was recorded. These three different individuals are experienced in using social networking sites, and the sites that were tested are *Facebook*, *MySpace*, and *YouTube*. In addition to the usability test, a survey was sent out to internet users for their opinions on how Friend Riot compared to the other sites in terms of design, ease of use, and originality. *SurveyMonkey* was used because it was simple to set up the survey and analyze the final results. A request to take the survey was sent through the Graphic Communication e-mail alias.

SURVEY

SurveyMonkey was used to create a survey to collect data regarding the potential success of *Friend Riot* in the social networking world. The link to the survey was sent out to the Graphic Communication e-mail alias, of which there were sixty-one (n=61) participants. The Graphic Communication e-mail alias includes a wide range of genders, ages, and interests, ensuring that any bias and skewed results were minimized. The questions that were asked in the survey were intended to find the most popular social networking sites on the Web and compare it to the start up site called Friend Riot. This survey was also intended to determine if the design of a Web site is a factor in its overall success, and compare its importance to other factors, such as features and interactivity.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES ARE YOU A MEMBER OF?

This question identifies the percentage of the population that uses certain social networking sites. The participants were asked check all that apply.

MySpace	40.0%
Facebook	96.7%
Twitter	30.0%
YouTube	60.0%
LinkedIn	33.3%
Flickr	25.0%
Last.fm	10.0%
Xanga	8.3%

WHICH SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE DO YOU USE MOST OFTEN?

Among all of the social networking sites listed in the previous question, this question identifies the one that is used the most. The participants were asked to choose one option.

MySpace	0%
Facebook	91.5%
Twitter	3.4%
YouTube	5.1%
LinkedIn	0%
Flickr	0%
Last.fm	0%
Xanga	0%

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES WHAT YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THAT SITE?

This question identifies why the participants continue to use a particular social networking site over another.

Design (layout, organization, colors)	9.1%
Features (commenting, sharing, photos)	69.1%
Ease of use	20.0%
Site never has issues or errors	1.8%
Privacy settings	0.0%

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE DESIGN OF A WEB SITE YOU VISIT?

This question reveals the role of web design in the overall success in a Web site.

Very important	65.6%
Somewhat important	31.1%
Neutral	3.3.%
Not important	0.0%

WHICH DESIGN ARE YOU MORE ATTRACTED TO?

The participants were asked to compare screen shots of two versions of the Friend Riot home page. The first one (Figure 1) is the original design, and the second one (Figure 2) is the newly redesigned version.

Original Friend Riot home page	1.6%
Redesigned Friend Riot home page	98.4%

FIGURE 1.0

Screen shot of original Friend Riot home page

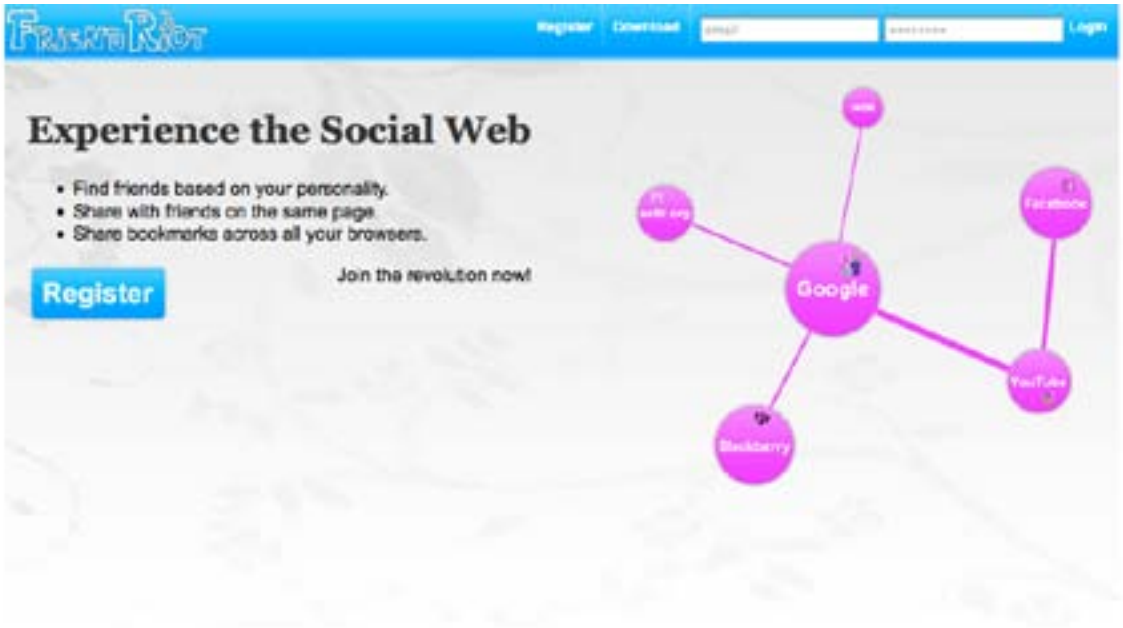

FIGURE 2.0
Screen shot of the redesigned Friend Riot home page

WOULD THE GRAPHIC DESIGN OF EACH INTERFACE FROM THE PREVIOUS QUESTION INFLUENCE YOUR DECISION TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THAT SITE?
Since the participants did not have access to the Friend Riot web site, their perception of it was based on their first impression of its look and feel. This question asks whether the participants have a tendency to use sites based their aesthetic appeal alone.

Yes	55.0%
No	1.7%
Possibly	43.3%
Not Sure	0.0%

DO YOU PREFER THE FRIEND RIOT HOME PAGE?
In terms of design, the participants were asked how the following layout of the Friend Riot user profile page (Figure 3) compares to that of the favorite social networking site they chose in the first question. Again, they did not have access to the actual site, so their judgements were based solely on its design.

I would prefer it	16.4%
I would not prefer it	47.5%
I have no preference	36.1%

FIGURE 3.0
Screen shot of the Friend Riot profile page

In addition to the survey, the second part of research consisted of designing and performing a usability test. A usability test is often used by developers to test a Web site's effectiveness and efficiency by recording the speed at which users can navigate it. To carry out this simple experiment, fake user accounts were created on three of the current most popular social networking sites: *Facebook*, *MySpace*, and *YouTube*. For example, a *Facebook* account was created for "Jabroni Pessagno," a name that will produce only one result in a search, allowing the participants to find it easily. On *YouTube*, an account called "JabroniPessagno100" was created, and a video was uploaded to validate the account in search results. Finally, on *MySpace*, an account with the profile name "Jabroni Pessagno" was created that would again return one result in a search. The intention of producing only one result in a search query was to eliminate the differences between of the sites' built-in search engines. This usability test was designed to test the speed of navigation by user and the ease at which a user can find what he or she is looking for, not to test its features.

Tasks that were common to all three of the sites were the ones being tested against, and these included adding a friend, changing the name on the profile, uploading a profile image, viewing a friend's profile, and logging out of the account. There were three participants in the experiment, all of which were familiar with the Web sites, thus effectively eliminating any learning curves required to use each site properly. All tests were performed from one computer on a reliable broadband internet connection. Each participant was given specific instructions on what to do (see Appendix A), and their task was to figure out how to do it. A stopwatch was used to record how fast, in seconds, each participant could carry out the tasks, and the results are recorded in Table 1.0.

TABLE 1.0: USABILTY TEST

FACEBOOK

Particpant	Add Friend	Change Profile Name	Change Profile Image	View Friend's Page	Log Out
1	36.79	27.05	25.10	17.30	3.27
2	4.31	53.18	44.61	15.62	3.65
3	30.98	48.38	45.45	5.48	3.27
Total	**72.08**	**128.61**	**115.16**	**38.4**	**10.19**

MYSPACE

Particpant	Add Friend	Change Profile Name	Change Profile Image	View Friend's Page	Log Out
1	23.30	21.23	45.99	12.63	2.89
2	21.61	20.41	145.26	9.54	4.05
3	48.29	30.12	136.86	10.93	9.81
Total	**93.20**	**92.99**	**328.11**	**33.10**	**16.75**

YOUTUBE

Particpant	Add Friend	Change Profile Name	Change Profile Image	View Friend's Page	Log Out
1	32.43	21.41	17.21	59.56	2.50
2	150.64	15.21	7.17	8.09	4.57
3	41.52	23.19	72.35	55.11	2.75
Total	**224.59**	**59.81**	**96.73**	**122.76**	**9.82**

Chapter 5: Conclusions

The results of the survey and usability test have shown which of the social networking sites are most popular, and which of their features are easy to use. Their identity is determined by the different features they each have to offer, but their acceptance is determined by how easy it is to use them. The design is an important factor in determining a site's success because it creates it identity while simultaneously facilitating its usability. The higher ease of use a web site has, the faster the users can use the site's features and perform important tasks.

From the data in the survey it is evident that *Facebook* is the most widely used social networking site. The particpants were asked to enter in any other sites that were not one of the choices, and some of those included were *Blip.fm*, *Tumblr*, *WooMe*, *DailyBooth*, and *Vimeo*. Although *MySpace* is used by 40 percent of the participants, it was never the most popular for any of the participants. *Facebook* again proved to be the dominant social networking site in that it was the most popular among 91.5% of the particpants. When asked why they chose *Facebook* over the others, the deciding factor was its features. Those who provided their feedback said that although they do not like the site itself, they take advantage of the ability to interact with others in order to "keep in touch."

Features that make a site unique are what attract users and allow them to want to continue using the site, but there is evidence that design and usability still play an important role in the site's popularity. In the screen shot comparisons, most participants responded that the design of a Web site is an important aspect. The redesign the *Friend Riot* home page consisted of the same basic content as the original, but the participants realized that it was organized in a more logical and aesthetically appealing way, causing them to prefer it.

Although there was a strong favoring toward the redesigned version, the results of the next question in the survey about how design influences their decision to join the site indicate somewhat that good Web site design is not always a deciding factor. Over half of the participants said that they would be more inclined to join the site if it was designed well, while less than 2 percent said it they would not be more inclined to join the site based on the design. Almost half said that the design could "possibly" have an effect on their decision

to join, meaning that they would require more information about the site than they received from just their first impression of its look and feel. There is not enough evidence to say that design is the only deciding factor, but it can be deduced that a well-designed site will have an advantage over a poorly designed one.

Even without knowing what the site's purpose is, or even how the site works, 16.4 percent of participants would prefer the interface of *Friend Riot* to their favorite social networking site. This number may seem low, but it does reveal the potential success that *Friend Riot* has. Some of the participants indicated that they because they do not know what the purpose of the site is or how the site functions, they were unable to make a fair judgement. Users prefer attractive Web sites over poorly designed ones, but will join a social networking site, nonetheless, if they find it to be useful.

Although each web site proved to be generally easy to navigate, they all had their flaws that caused certain participants to spend longer amounts of time than on others figuring out how to accomplish the tasks. During the usability test, for example, it was easy to find and add a friend on *Facebook*, but it was difficult to change the name on the profile. The area where users change their name is located separate from the area where users change their other profile information, causing some of the participants to search through multiple areas of the site in order to find its correct location. It was simple to view a friend's profile on *MySpace*, but changing the default profile image became a challenge. Changing the default profile image was the most time-consuming task among the three participants, and the participants spent more than triple the time accomplishing this task than it took on *YouTube*.

In order to compete in the social networking world, the start-up site, *Friend Riot*, would not only need to have innovative and unique features, it would also have to be easier to use than the Web sites in this usability test. The data from the usability test show high difficulty areas in usability, and *Friend Riot* can benefit from it by knowing in which areas to improve and how to set apart itself from the competition.

A web site that allows the user to easily find his or her destination is brought forth via an effective design of layout, organization, and architecture. A good design is the result of a developer viewing the Web site through the eyes of the audience, and also through feedback

from potential users. Even though a Web site's design must be unique in order to set it apart from its competition, it must also follow the conventions of Web design that allow its users to navigate it with ease. The site must be developed for a wide range of audiences because not everyone uses the World Wide Web in the same way. Web sites that account for any method of access, especially social networking sites, gain wide acceptance from their users and generate beneficial results in their success.

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Appendix

USABILITY TEST INSTRUCTIONS

FACEBOOK

- » While logged into participant's own account, find and add "Jabroni Pessagno"
- » While logged into particpant's own account, find and view Jabroni Pessagno's profile
- » Log out of Facebook
- » While logged into Jabroni Pessagno's account, change the profile picture to the given image stored on the computer's desktop
- » While logged into Jabroni Pessagno's account, change the name to "Jimbo Pessagno"

MYSPACE

- » While logged into participant's own account, find and add "Jabroni Pessagno"
- » While logged into particpant's own account, find and view Jabroni Pessagno's profile
- » Log out of MySpace
- » While logged into Jabroni Pessagno's account, change the profile picture to the given image stored on the computer's desktop
- » While logged into Jabroni Pessagno's account, change the name to "Jimbo Pessagno"

YOUTUBE

- » While logged into participant's own account, find and add "JabroniPessagno100"
- » While logged into particpant's own account, find and view Jabroni Pessagno's profile
- » Log out of YouTube
- » While logged into Jabroni Pessagno's account, change the profile picture to the given image stored on the computer's desktop
- » While logged into Jabroni Pessagno's account, change the name to "Jimbo Pessagno"