

Monika Suckfüll / Flavia Schwerd / Michael Scharrow

Universität der Künste Berlin

Kommunikations- und Medienwissenschaften

Modes of Internet Use

Abstract for a poster

submitted for

GOR German Online Research

March 10–12, 2008 in Hamburg

Motives for internet use raise the questions: WHY do I go online? Which needs do I try to satisfy? Modes of internet use raise the questions: HOW do I go about the internet? Is it possible to identify certain overall strategies that users adopt across different online content?

The basis of this article is the consideration that an exact observation of the HOW of internet use allows conclusions about the design of websites and could serve as a supplement to classic user segments. The superordinated theoretical and methodological concept of the studies described below is based on the research program *reception modes* developed by Suckfüll (2004).

The first step was to incorporate available theoretical considerations and empirical findings into a preliminary model (Herder 2006, Teevan et al. 2004, Choo, Detlor & Turnbull 2000, Weber & Groner 1999, Wirth & Schweiger 1999, Canter, Rivers & Storrs 1985 et al.). We fit the multitude of possible strategies of internet use into a three-dimensional model. Evidently online behaviour depends on the respective goal or task. The continuum stretches from the absence of any particular goal to the search for an explicitly defined piece of information. At the same time, online behaviour depends on the time at disposal. This continuum stretches from the goal to obtain a piece of information fast and without any loss of time to full temporal flexibility. The third dimension in our model is a continuum from rational to heuristic decision strategy (cp. Wirth & Schweiger, 1999).

In a pilot study we generated an extensive item-pool consisting of 150 statements concerning the use of the internet. The participants received diverse topics to research online and they were instructed to think aloud while doing that. Later the transcripts were used for extracting information about the individual way of handling possibilities while searching on the internet (e.g. selection strategies in search engines, navigation on websites, etc.). Based on this information, statements were formulated. The next step was to select 70 items and use them in an online-survey with 374 participants. A bipolar five-ary rating scale was used for determining the degree of confirmation of the statements.

The evaluation of the survey was conducted through a confirmatory factor analysis. The preliminary measurement model, which however represents only a part of

the theoretical model, is a four-factor model with the internet modes *teleporting*, *orientteering*, *informal search* and *surfing* ($\chi^2 / df = 2,2$; RMSEA = ,058; SRMR = .05; $p = .000$; CFI = .94; TLI = .92). The model locates and describes in detail both modelled and potential modes which are to be considered in future studies.

Literatur

- Canter, D., Rivers, R., & Storrs, G. (1985). Characterizing user navigation through complex data structures. *Behavior & Information Technology*, 4, 93-102.
- Choo, C. W., Detlor, B., & Turnbull, D. (2000). Information Seeking on the Web: An integrated Model of Browsing and Searching. [URL: http://firstmonday.org/issues/52/choo/index.html](http://firstmonday.org/issues/52/choo/index.html) [retrieved: 2.4.2007]
- Herder, E. (2006). *Forward, backward and home again. Analyzing user behavior on the web*. PhD Thesis, University of Twente, Netherlands.
- Suckfüll, M. (2004). *Rezeptionsmodalitäten. Ein integratives Konstrukt für die Medienwirkungsforschung*. [Reception modes. An integrative construct for the media effect research]. München: Fischer.
- Teevan, J., Alvarado, C., Ackerman, M., & Karger, D. (2004). The perfect search engine is not enough: A study of orientteering behavior in directed search, in 'Proc. Chi 2004', pp. 415–422.
- Weber, C., & Groner, R. (1999). Suchstrategien im WWW bei Laien und Experten. [Online searching strategies of laymen and experts] In W. Schweiger, & W. Wirth (Hrsg.), *Selektion im Internet* [Online selection] (S. 181-196). Opladen: Wiesbaden.
- Wirth, W., & Schweiger, W. (1999). Selektion neu betrachtet: Auswahlentscheidungen im Internet [Selection revisited. Selection decisions online]. In W. Schweiger, & W. Wirth (Hrsg.), *Selektion im Internet* (S. 43-74). Opladen: Wiesbaden.