



**HOGESCHOOL  
UTRECHT**

## Case analysis

A structured inventory of questions for the analysis of a case



Version 1.1  
Date: 16 October 2010

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# Introduction

## ***Aim***

The aim of this document is to provide a structured set of questions for the analysis of a case.

The advantage of using a structured set of questions as a starting point is not only that the analysis can be carried out more systematically but, more importantly, that it makes it easier to communicate about different cases and draw comparisons between them. Particularly the latter may help create a review framework: taking a bird's eye view at all the cases enables us to interpret developments, strengths and weaknesses, best practices, etc.

## ***Context***

The context of this structured set of questions is the research into cross-media that is conducted by the Crossmedialab.

The selection of questions is based on cross-media studies, which means that the cases envisioned are drawn from media, information technology and communication, with specific attention being paid to cross-media characteristics and idiosyncrasies. These questions are primarily classified under the relevant question heading, but questions in other categories have also been selected with the same intention. That does not mean that the analysis questions may not be applicable to other cases but, obviously, the description of a medical or legal case requires other questions (too).

## ***Definition***

We take a case to mean a product, service and/or occurrence that is limited in time and/or space.

Naturally, an important question is: what do we consider to be a case? It is difficult to come up with a definition that would cover everything. In any event, it always concerns a concrete manifestation that is limited in time and/or space. We consider a 'manifestation' to mean:

1. Products: an iPhone, a television series like *De Oorlog* (The War), a magazine, etc.
2. Services: Twitter, video-on-demand such as *uitzendinggemist.nl* (rerun website), a navigation route through a museum, etc.
3. Events: an advertising or election campaign, festivals, museum exhibitions, the Olympics, a news event like the landing on the moon or the death of Princess Diana, etc.

There are, of course, numerous examples in which these categories are combined. For the analysis it is advisable to choose a clear demarcation. Take, for instance, the perspective of a company or organisation: 'What does the *Stedelijk Museum* do with an augmented reality?' or 'How does Sony incorporate 3D possibilities in its products?'

## ***Approach***

The approach adopted is to make a pragmatic selection from questions from models and theories that have the analysis of (new) services/products as their objective.

In principle, no single question is without value or free from a (theoretical) context. Quite possibly, therefore, a case analysis can be carried out from a certain perspective (for instance, from a semiotic perspective or a feminist perspective) or based on a certain methodology (for instance, content

analysis). Rather than enforcing any directions, this inventory aims to formulate the questions quite 'neutrally', so that, without the theory, the questions may still be applicable and possibly even obvious, with questions about the social context, for example, or about the technological context, the historical context, etc. Incidentally, the categories are not at odds with one another; some questions, therefore, apply to different categories.

## ***Usage***

No specific requirements have been set for the use of the questions. The 'analyst', student and lecturer may make their own selection from the questions, add their own questions or use another subdivision. In addition, this document does not address the presentation of the results, nor does it include a prescription for the order in which the questions should be dealt with.

The inventory of analysis questions is a guideline. Everyone is free to use it in any way desired. It is not a questionnaire, but rather an initial impetus to think for yourself and come up with your own questions. The person performing the analysis does not have to meet a specific level. The difference in level is far more expressed in the way an answer is collated and in the degree of detail in the report. For example, the information about a control remote for a television set can be googled, or you can perform an extensive (historical) analysis and make it the topic of your doctoral thesis (as has been done). Analysis results may be presented orally, in writing or through a multimedia presentation. This document does not address that issue. Because the inventory in its entirety still includes a great number of questions, a 'Quick Scan' has been added at the end, with a selection of questions that in our view should render a minimal but complete picture of a case.

## ***Report***

To your report on a case on the basis of this inventory, you should add: a proper summary of the case, a general reflection on the analysis depending on your starting question, and the sources you have used to describe and analyse the case. Use visual materials to clarify what the case looks like, how it works, how it is used - for instance screen prints, user guides, maps of a museum or festival site, etc. In any case, do not turn your report into a question-and-answer game, but describe the case in a continuous, gripping story that provides the reader/viewer with insight.

## ***Examples***

Example cases can be found on <http://www.crossmedialab.nl/impact> and on the 'History of the Future' wiki: [http://crossmedialab.nl/wiki/hotf/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://crossmedialab.nl/wiki/hotf/index.php/Main_Page).

## **A. The basic characteristics of the case**

- A1 What is it?
- A2 What is it intended for?
- A3 What parts does it consist of?
- A4 On what value proposition is the case based?
- A5 Why would people like to have/do it?
- A6 For what aim is the case designed/made?
- A7 What unique characteristics of the case are primarily focused on?
- A8 What is the essence of the case?
- A9 How does the slogan of the case express that essence?
- A10 What information is available about the case?

## **B. Technology**

- B1 Which technology is relevant to the case?
- B2 Has certain open source technology, standards and/or proprietary technology been used?
- B3 How does the case work, technology-wise?
- B4 On which technologies does the case depend?
- B5 Is the technology new? How innovative is the technology used?
- B6 Are there any comparable technological cases?
- B7 Which enabling technology does the case use? (for instance, payment authorisation, security, profile management)
- B8 What quality requirements and wishes have been set for the technology?
- B9 Does the technology allow the personalisation of the case? If so, to what degree and in what way?
- B10 Does it concern an open or a closed technological system?
- B11 Must the user identify him or herself in order to use the case? (for instance, log on)
- B12 How is privacy arranged/guaranteed?

## **C. Organisation**

- C1 Who owns the case? And who is responsible for it?
- C2 Who developed the case?
- C3 Who performed the case?
- C4 What network of parties is required to deliver the case to the client?
- C5 Which activities and roles are required for the realisation of the case?
- C6 What relations and agreements exist between all the parties involved?
- C7 Does the case involve a new agreement between the parties?
- C8 Does the case involve a new way of working together?
- C9 How have issues concerning ownership and copyright been arranged?
- C10 Does the case involve customer support? If so, how is this organised?
- C11 How is the case sold?
- C12 How is the case distributed?
- C13 What reputation/image do the different parties have?
- C14 Does the case involve a monopolist?

## **D. Financial**

- D1 Who finances the case?
- D2 How has this financing been arranged?
- D3 Who pays for the case?
- D4 How much does the client/end-user pay?
- D5 How can the client/end-user pay for the case?
- D6 What are the sources of income of the case?
- D7 Which debit items are involved?
- D8 Which parties are involved in the costs and gains of the chain?
- D9 How much would a client or end-user pay for the case?
- D10 What revenue is/was expected and what revenue was actually achieved?
- D11 Which investments are needed?
- D12 Which write-off items were involved?
- D13 Which operational costs are involved?

## **E. Users**

- E1 For which target group/client/end-users is the case intended?
- E2 Are the client and end-user the same?
- E3 By which target group/client/end-user is the case actually used?
- E4 Has the effect of the case on the target group/client/end-user been measured? If so, what was this effect?
- E5 How often does the target group/client/end-user use the case?
- E6 Is it known as to how the client/end-user/target group feels about the case? How is it valued/appreciated?
- E7 Is the target group/client/end-user satisfied with the availability of the case?
- E8 Is the target group/client/end-user satisfied with the availability of the case?
- E9 Do any alternatives exist for the target group/client/end-user?
- E10 Are there any differences in the way the target group/client/end-user uses the case?
- E11 What are the unique advantages of the case for the target group/client/end-user in comparison to the alternatives?
- E12 In what context is the case being used?
- E13 Which skills should the target group/client/end-user have, or is supposed to have, in order to use/undergo the case?
- E14 How does the case benefit the client/end-user?
- E15 What motivation is supposed to exist with the target group/client/end-user for using/undergoing the case?
- E16 Does the target group/client/end-user continually have the possibility to use the case?
- E17 Has the target group/client/end-user organised itself in a community focused on the case?
- E18 Is any target group/client/end-user excluded from the case?

## **F. Cross-media**

- F1 Are multiple media being used?
- F2 Which characteristics of the different media are particularly used?
- F3 How do the media refer to one another?
- F4 Is there a time-based order in the application of the different media?
- F5 Does the case involve a cross-media strategy?
- F6 Is a certain medium predominating?
- F7 What role does the (activity of the) client/end-user play in the case?
- F8 Does the case involve cross-media? What is the reason for using cross-media and what is to be achieved by doing so?
- F9 How is the communication/the story divided over the different media?
- F10 What interaction is possible/necessary at what moment and through what medium?
- F11 What is the story told by the case? How is the relevant information structured?
- F12 What forms of information does the case provide? Through which media?

## **G. Usability**

- G1 Does the case sufficiently communicate as to what it has to offer to the clients/end-users?
- G2 Does the interface include an overview of the most important content?
- G3 Do the content and presentation meet the goals of the case?
- G4 From the perspective of a new client/end-user, has the information been structured logically?
- G5 Is the navigation through the case clear?
- G6 Is it always clear as to what one should do to carry out certain actions?
- G7 Does the case take into account the usage by special groups (the blind, the disabled, young children, etc.)?
- G8 Is the design functional and supportive?
- G9 What interaction elements have been included? How have these been designed?
- G10 What kind of interface is being used? (remember haptic/sensory interfaces)
- G11 Can information be easily found?
- G12 How is text used? How is the typography?
- G13 How are images used?
- G14 How are colours used?

## H. Intertextuality

- H1 How do clients/end-users talk about the case?
- H2 How do peers talk about the case?
- H3 How do the media talk about the case?
- H4 Does the case belong to a certain genre or convention? If so, how does that manifest itself in the case?
- H5 Are certain recognisable people/actors/archetypes a part of the case?
- H6 Does the case refer to other cases in the same domain/genre or others?
- H7 Does the case refer to other instances (in the same series)?
- H8 Does the case refer to itself?
- H9 What symbols, clichés, and stereotypes are used in the case?
- H10 What striking issues are not addressed in the case?
- H11 Does the case criticise other cases somehow?

## **I. Communication & Marketing**

- 11 How has the 'provider' communicated about the case?
- 12 Who was that communication focused on? Who communicated?
- 13 Does the case involve a communication strategy? If so, what does this strategy look like?
- 14 What is the communication about?
- 15 Which marketing tools have been used?
- 16 Does the case involve a marketing strategy? If so, what does this strategy look like?
- 17 Is any research available on the effectiveness of the communication and marketing involved in the case?

## **J. Historical context**

- J1 When was the case developed/produced/rolled out/marketed/discontinued or did it disappear?
- J2 How has the case developed through time?
- J3 What developments are being foreseen for the future?
- J4 Is this a new case or an improved version of an earlier case?
- J5 What have been the highs and lows of the case?
- J6 What is new about the case?
- J7 What (comparable) cases preceded the case?
- J8 What (comparable) cases followed the case?
- J9 What influence has the spirit of the times had on the development and the use of the case?
- J10 What has been the influence of the case on the future?

\* The historical context here relates to both the history of the case itself and to the case in relation to its times.

## **K. Social context**

- K1 Where was the case developed/produced/rolled out/marketed/discontinued or did it disappear?
- K2 Which external factors have influenced the development and the success/failure of the case?
- K3 How popular is the case?
- K4 Is a discussion going on in society about the case? If so, who is taking part in the discussion and what are the arguments?
- K5 Is the case available and accessible to everyone? If not, who or what is preventing this?
- K6 What social circumstances have been crucial to the case?
- K7 What influence has the case itself had on social developments?

## Quick Scan

The following limited set of questions should render a minimal but reasonably complete analysis of a case.

- A1 What is it?
- A2 What is it intended for?
- A3 What parts does it consist of?
- B1 Which technology is relevant to the case?
- B3 How does the case work, technology-wise?
- C4 What network of parties is required to deliver the case to the client?
- C5 Which activities and roles are required for the realisation of the case?
- D8 Which parties are involved in the costs and gains of the chain?
- E1 For which target group/client/end-users is the case intended?
- E14 How does the case benefit the client/end-user?
- F8 Does the case involve cross-media? What is the reason for using cross-media and what is to be achieved by doing so?
- F12 What forms of information does the case provide? And through which media?
- G3 Do the content and presentation meet the goals of the case?
- H3 How do the media talk about the case?
- H6 Does the case refer to other cases in the same domain/genre or others?
- H9 What symbols, clichés, and stereotypes are used in the case?
- I3 Does the case involve a communication strategy? If so, what does this strategy look like?
- I6 Does the case involve a marketing strategy? If so, what does this strategy look like?
- J1 When was the case developed/produced/rolled out/marketed/discontinued or did it disappear?
- J7/J8 What (comparable) cases preceded the case? What followed it?
- K6 What social circumstances have been crucial to the case?

# Colophon

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Case analysis.

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October 2010.

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