

Research Assignment at the Crossmedialab

Title

Location Based Services (LBS) for retailers in the heart of the city of Utrecht

Problem environment

Online shopping has grown enormously in the Netherlands; at the same time, there has been a noticeable shift in buying streams, moving from downtown shopping to shopping malls on the periphery of the city. The relation between physical visits to the city and visits to its shopping malls has become looser and online shopping and – cultural – recreation activities will continue to grow at an ever-increasing rate. This change presents new, complex business issues for SMEs operating in the heart of cities across the Netherlands. It has brought about a mixture of online and offline shopping activities with new media resources as the connecting link. If retailers want to continue their forward-looking activities, they will have to latch onto this development.

Most of the downtown entrepreneurs have their own websites containing their name and address, opening hours and sometimes also information about the product range, menus or a calendar of their activities. Only a few have web shops as a supplement for their physical shops. In this respect, it is noteworthy that the Internet as a medium has not really been much of a conscious choice among entrepreneurs. Consumers tend to be impulsive, and offering too much information can also be counter-productive; more does not always mean better. A web shop may generate more revenue, but as a consequence impulse purchases are being reduced at the same time.

The arrival of new media has created new possibilities of combining online and offline entrepreneurship. A group of downtown entrepreneurs (shopkeepers, hospitality businesses, museums, cultural institutes) from Enschede and Utrecht sees opportunities in new media, but they lack the knowledge and exemplary projects in order to acquire the full benefits and potential of these resources. Social media, but also GPS technology, Wi-Fi, in-store Internet and smart phones, present massive opportunities for innovation in the interactions between entrepreneurs and consumers. By utilising the potential among various entrepreneur groups in combination with the unique urban environment, we may be able to increase the strength of the consumer ↔ city entrepreneur ↔ city connection and positively affect consumer spending patterns and, as a result, entrepreneur success rates. The problem with entrepreneurs is that although they are eager to use a combination of different media resources in communication (cross-media), they don't have any idea how to utilise and take advantage of these resources.

This research assignment centres on the use of Location Based Services as a possible link between online and offline shopping in the city of Utrecht. In this respect, consideration could be given to applications such as Foursquare, Gowella, Yelp and Groupon.

Research question

In what way and to what effect can Location Based Services contribute towards the integration of online and offline shopping for shopkeepers in the heart of the city of Utrecht?

Relationship with the Crossmedialab's research project

This research is part of the 'Centrumondernemers & Media Technologie' project that is carried out in conjunction with the Saxion Universities of Applied Sciences.

Business description:

The Crossmedialab (<http://www.crossmedialab.nl>) is a workplace within the Faculty of Communication & Journalism for applied research into cross-media content. The areas of research include media, cultural heritage, marketing and education, and focus on individual experience of cross-media, organisational value exchange processes and societal developments concerning media literacy. Research is conducted through a series of projects carried out by project teams, in which students, lecturers and external researchers and business partners participate.

Desired researcher profile:

You possess strong writing skills; you are pro-active and demonstrate a positive critical attitude. You have a broad interest in the research subject and you are ambitious. You enjoy working in a dynamic and challenging environment.

Contact information:

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Position: Researcher/Lecturer

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Project Assignment 30 ECTS (Graduation Project)

Examine how and to what effect Location Based Services can contribute to the integration of online and offline shopping for shopkeepers in the heart of the city of Utrecht.

Project approach

1. Literature search into the use of LBS for the retail sector.
2. Collect and analyse 10 case studies into the use of LBS for retailers in city core areas.
3. Design and create a LBS for retailers or a group of retailers in the heart of the city of Utrecht.
4. Examine the effect of the LBS on consumer spending patterns among retail customers.

Project results

1. Graduation thesis
2. Detailed LBS for retailers or a group of retailers in Utrecht
3. Presentations at the Crossmedialab
4. Contribution to the 'LabRats' book series.

Standard documents (all can be found at <http://www.crossmedialab.nl/curious>)

- Doing your graduation project at the Crossmedialab
- Templates for a research proposal, a research plan and a research report
- Case analysis
- Literature references.

Examples

- Project plan 'Centrumondernemers & Media Technologie'.
- "[Foundations of Location Based Services](#)", Stefan Steiniger, Moritz Neun and Alistair Edwardes, [University of Zurich](#)
- "[Location Based Services for Mobiles: Technologies and Standards](#)", Shu Wang, Jungwon Min and Byung K. Yi

Respond

Please consult the guidelines for graduation projects at the Crossmedialab to complete the required steps if you want to participate in this graduation project.

Project Assignment 15 ECTS (Graduation Project)*

Examine how and to what effect Location Based Services can contribute to the integration of online and offline shopping for shopkeepers in the heart of the city of Utrecht.

Project approach

1. Literature search into the use of LBS for the retail sector.
2. Collect and analyse 5 case studies into the use of LBS for retailers in city core areas.
3. Design and create a LBS for retailers or a group of retailers in the heart of the city of Utrecht.
4. Examine the effect of the LBS on consumer spending patterns among retail customers.

Project results

1. Graduation thesis
2. Detailed LBS for retailers or a group of retailers in Utrecht
3. Presentations at the Crossmedialab
4. Contribution to the 'LabRats' book series.

Standard documents (all can be found at <http://www.crossmedialab.nl/curious>)

- Doing your graduation project at the Crossmedialab
- Templates for a research proposal, a research plan and a research report
- Case analysis
- Literature references.

Examples

- Project plan 'Centrumondernemers & Media Technologie'.
- "[Foundations of Location Based Services](#)", Stefan Steiniger, Moritz Neun and Alistair Edwardes, [University of Zurich](#)
- "[Location Based Services for Mobiles: Technologies and Standards](#)", Shu Wang, Jungwon Min and Byung K. Yi

Respond

Please consult the guidelines for graduation projects at the Crossmedialab to complete the required steps if you want to participate in this graduation project.

* Note: the difference with assignment 30 ECTS lies in the number of examples to be examined and the scope of the chosen theme.

Project Assignment 5 ECTS (Practical Assignment)

Implement an LBS for a retailer in the heart of the city of Utrecht.

Project approach

1. Find an entrepreneur or a group of entrepreneurs in the heart of the city of Utrecht.
2. Select one existing LBS that 'befits' the entrepreneur and will stimulate online and offline sales.
3. Implement the LBS for the entrepreneur.

Project results

1. Implementation of an LBS
2. Write an essay on the application of LBS for retailers in city core areas.

Standard documents (all can be found at <http://www.crossmedialab.nl/curious>)

- Case analysis
- Literature references.

Examples

- Project plan 'Centrumondernemers & Media Technologie'.
- "[Foundations of Location Based Services](#)", Stefan Steiniger, Moritz Neun and Alistair Edwardes, [University of Zurich](#)
- "[Location Based Services for Mobiles: Technologies and Standards](#)", Shu Wang, Jungwon Min and Byung K. Yi