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Electronic word of mouth and the impact of source factors.

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“This thesis is a part of the MSc program at BI Norwegian School of Management. The school takes no responsibility for the methods used, results found and conclusions drawn.”

Preface

This thesis concludes the two-year Master of Science program at the BI Norwegian School of Management. The topic is very relevant to the realm of Marketing, which is the major of both the authors. We both have an interest in the possibilities created by new and interactive media such as the World Wide Web, and recognize the ever growing importance of these media as the world is getting more and more connected and an increasing part of commerce is situated in a virtual environment.

This thesis could not have been completed without the help from several contributors. From the idea stage it has benefited from guidance of Hans Mathias Thjømmøe. His direction in the development and collection stage got the research off to the right start and his assistance is highly appreciated. The qualitative part of the study was an interview with akam.no editor Erik Faarlund and thanks to him the qualitative part could be formed with the proper knowledge about cameras and the costumers preferences. A very important acknowledgment goes to Bertil Knudsen who proofread the finished thesis and gave notes on language issues. He also gave helped in the process of translating the scales used into Norwegian.

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Abstract

This study has evaluated the aspects of source factors and their influence on perceived credibility in the context of word-of-mouth (WOM) and compared it with the literature on electronic-word-of-mouth (eWOM). Through this comparison, holes in the literature regarding how the receiver of eWOM evaluates credibility when the information about the sender is scarce or missing are revealed and a two-part study is conducted. The main findings indicate that a larger amount of information about the sender will result in a higher degree of credibility independent of what the content of the message is. It is also found significant differences between men and women in the evaluation of both the product presented and the credibility of the eWOM source. Previous findings in regular WOM studies have indicated that knowledge about the product category works as a moderator of the WOM received, this was in this study also confirmed in an eWOM setting. The thesis ends with pointing out future directions in the research of eWOM.

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1.0 Introduction

The Internet is increasingly becoming a complete environment for consumption (Kozinets 2002), with both similarities and differences in consumer behaviour compared to traditional offline settings. In the early days of the World Wide Web, the differences mainly concerned how this advent in communication technology forced companies to change their strategies and value propositions in the “market space” (Rayport and Sviokla 1994). However, Armstrong and Hagel (1996) believed that one-way advertising did not fully exploit the new possibilities created by the web medium, and proposed that businesses should aim to create and organize online communities in order to achieve commercial success. Over the years, the growth of such C2C communication has been immense. Searching for the term “Elkjøp” in Norwegian Usenet groups returns 7,820 unique postings as of November 25th 2005 (Google 2005). A brief browsing of these results shows that the mentions are primarily expressions of opinion and advice between consumers, with no sign of intercession by the company, making it a prime example of real life eWOM.

The combination of ubiquity, source inconspicuousness and vast availability of eWOM (Goldsmith and Borowitz 2006) gives a picture of a powerful, yet uncontrollable, marketing tool. To better gain comprehension and control of this vital resource, it is important to understand how the information is perceived and how the perception is influenced. The aim of this thesis is to gain understanding on how the credibility of online C2C communication is perceived, and how differences in credibility influence consumer behaviour. The first part of the thesis will be a literature review of online C2C communication, a fast-growing area of research, as well as source factor theory. The review will culminate in a research question elaborated in a number of hypotheses that will be subject to empirical testing. The results will be analyzed and discussed, ending up with conclusions that will offer managerial implications and suggestions for further research, thus concluding the thesis.

2.0 Literature review

2.1 *Electronic word of mouth*

As the World Wide Web turns 15 years in 2006 (Connolly 2000), online communities are nothing new. At groups.google.com, it is possible to read USENET newsgroup postings from May 1981 (Google 2003). Although not available for the common man until the advent of the World Wide Web in the mid-nineties, the concept of online communities is over 25 years old. However, in the last few years Internet usage has grown immensely (Kozinets 2002), and as more and more people are getting online, more and more people are connecting in communities. As such communities often are related to hobbies and interests, they are fertile grounds for flows of product- and service-related information from consumer to consumer, or in other words: word of mouth (WOM). WOM communication has for a long time been regarded as a powerful source of influence on consumers' judgments of products and services (Herr et al. 1991).

There is a considerable body of research done on this phenomenon, mainly with regard to interpersonal face-to-face communication (see Rogers 1983 or Anderson 1998). The concept of WOM in an online context has been relevant since the 80s and been more or less in focus for social science researchers since the mid-90s, already then recognizing the potential power of such a medium (Armstrong and Hagel 1996). Over the years, eWOM has grown to be a significant field of study, and research of the phenomena of online communities can be done in many fields, such as consumer behavior, technological advancements and social interactions (Smith & Kollock 1999). Due to the increasing attention and interest eWOM has gained, a growing body of research is available, but much still needs to be studied. As mentioned, the Internet population is in constant growth and because of this, changes in demographic features of active Internet users is another important factor that substantiates the need for further research in the field of interpersonal online communication. This section of the literature review will first focus on the concept of word of mouth, then covering what sets the electronic version of WOM apart from its traditional physical progenitor as well as motivation for reading and

writing eWOM, before suggesting a typology of eWOM based on previous research and definitions.

2.1.1 Principles of WOM

With all the information consumers have at their fingertips today, with the large amount of advertising and product pushing they are exposed to from commercial sources people still seek their acquaintances for information, and ask people they know and trust for guidance. Such information sources are considered to be significant sources of influence on opinions about products, services and brand names. In fact, “personal contacts seem to be most effective in causing changes in opinion and behavior” (Brooks 1957: 155). Although it is fifty years old, this definition is still valid today. Reichheld described WOM (2003) as the one marketing related number a business need to grow to gain success. The impact of WOM is not to be underestimated, and can be powerful enough to make or break a business or a product launch. Positive WOM has shown to increase the likelihood of purchase and make the adoption of new products move faster (Arndt 1967), especially if the risk is perceived to be high by the customer. WOM has also proved to be much more effective than usual advertising when it comes to moving people into favourable states of attitude towards the brand (Day 1972). In the research done by Day (1972), the exposure to positive WOM shifted nine times as many people into a favourable state of attitude than regular advertising, thus corroborating Brooks’ (1957) observation. In addition, the results showed that advertising alone was not enough to establish a firm attitude toward a brand, whereas WOM was. The advertising gave good results for creating awareness, but without any exposure to WOM or usage of the product the attitude was not noticeably strong (Day 1972). Although this research is somewhat old, it is still relevant today. Due to the increased media exposure and vast increase in advertising exposure since 1972, people today are even less influenced by advertising than in 1972, thus proving the significance of the study.

2.1.2 Distinctive aspects of eWOM

In the last decade, the Internet has matured tremendously, going from being only available for the most technologically savvy individuals to a considerable source

of information for a great part of the population (Findahl 2004). In Norway, the government is actively taking steps to increase Internet knowledge in the population, and aim to be world leading in offering public services on-line (Moderniseringsdepartementet 2005). Research done by Eurostat (Demunter 2005) shows that with 60% of households connected to the Internet, Norway is among the most connected countries in Europe. An example of the extensiveness of eWOM is the Norwegian-language portal hardware.no, which contains consumer reviews and discussion forums, and boasts over 170,000 unique visitors each month (Røste 2005). Studies has also shown that people often use information they find in online stores to make decisions in physical retail stores instead of purchasing the product online (Browne et.al. 2004). A study done by Intelliseek found that in 2005, consumers had posted about two billion product- and service-related online comments, which was a “significant increase” over the previous year (Parker 2005).

This thesis will explore how eWOM can impact the changing attitude to the product mentioned in the eWOM. Much research has been done to define the drivers of attitude change in traditional WOM situations and how the source factors influence the evaluation and result of the communication. However, the difference in many of these source factors in an online situation constitutes a gap in the evaluation of online sources posting to forums and web logs or other consumer posting sites. A number of studies have focused on the factors that set eWOM apart from its traditional offline counterpart. Deriving from studies by Kiecker and Cowles (2001) and Gelb and Sundaram (2002), Goldsmith and Horowitz (2006: 2) show that interpersonal communication online differs from offline on the:

1. variety of avenues or means by which consumers can exchange information,
2. anonymity and confidentiality online through which consumers don't have to reveal their identities when seeking and giving advice,
3. physical cues used to assess the identity of other which are lacking,
4. freedom from geographic and time constraints that make cyberspace a global community paralleling the local physical one, and
5. permanence of online conversations

As mentioned, the blossoming number of discussion forums and consumer portals indicates that eWOM has an enormous potential reach, and appropriately assessing the value of this resource will have impact on companies' strategies in several ways. Companies such as Nielsen BuzzMetrics (2005) are basing their business on monitoring different types of eWOM – or consumer-generated media (CGM) – for companies wanting to learn more about how they are portrayed and talked about in cyberspace. This expresses one of the more paramount implications of eWOM compared to traditional WOM – the ability to methodically monitor and store the information. Viral marketing through eWOM has for some time been a trend among forward-thinking marketers and is still gaining popularity (Modzelewski 2000, WOMMA 2005), further demonstrating the importance of the topic of the thesis.

2.1.3 Typology of eWOM

Online C2C communication exists in many guises, each with different kinds of writers, readers, contexts and topics. Senecal and Nantel (2001) provides a framework of interpersonal influence on the web, comprising messages from sellers and commercially linked 3rd parties as well as non-commercially linked 3rd parties, which normally constitutes what is commonly regarded as WOM. The two first categories have a direct commercial interest in providing word of mouth, and the various types of such promotional interpersonal communication will not be the focus of this thesis. It is however very important to realize that for readers of eWOM, the borders between the three categories can often be unclear, as sender information might be scarce. Senecal and Nantel divides the three categories further into three subcategories based on type of sender: Other consumers (1), experts (2), and consumer decision support and recommender systems (CDSS/RS) (3). For the non-commercial category, other consumers are virtual communities such as discussion forums and virtual opinion platforms, experts are advice-giving independent websites such as about.com, and CDSS/RS are independent recommendation sites based on user preferences and interests, such as moviecritic.com.

As mentioned earlier, the World Wide Web is a fast-evolving communication arena, and new eWOM types such as web logs (“blogs”) have flourished since

Senecal and Nantel completed their framework. Although their study provides a good overview of the different kinds of online interpersonal communication, further categorization is needed in order to reveal possibly vital differences between different kinds of non-commercially linked interpersonal communication arenas. Of the three subcategories mentioned above, this thesis will mainly focus on Other Consumers (1), because of the aspect of anonymity and lack of sender identification cues which is paramount to the thesis' focus of research. This subcategory is characterized by C2C interpersonal communication, where it is usually not revealed whether the sender has any particular expertise or education regarding the topic discussed. Drawing on various research studies in the field of eWOM, the section below is a proposed overview of the different types of online interpersonal communication that falls under the subcategory as described by Senecal and Nantel. The purpose of this overview is to understand more about each facet of eWOM, and explore how source credibility is impacted of the differing contexts. The overview suggests these categories: Discussion forums, Usenet newsgroups, Blogs, Virtual Opinion Platforms and Social Networks.

2.1.3.1 Forums and discussion boards

A discussion board or forum consists of voluntary participants who share some form of interest. This can be everything from a hobby to a profession. The forums are a gathering of small texts written by these people about more or less relevant subjects and are usually available for everyone to read, both registered members of the forums and random readers. People who do not benefit from other people's actions often submit contributions, thus the information is mostly unbiased (Hennig-Thurau and Walsh 2003). People seek out this information to read about topics of interest or when in a purchase situation, to reduce risk and save time searching the whole web for information (Hennig-Thurau and Walsh 2003). The degree of knowledge about and identity cues concerning the sender is usually small on a forum. Normally, the only cues are a nickname and various statistics pertaining to the user's activity on the forum, such as number of posts and duration of the forum membership.

2.1.3.2 USENET

The USENET is a network of discussion groups – newsgroups – of various topics of interest created in 1979, and today boasts over 50,000 different groups (Google 2006a). It has many of the same features as a WWW-situated forum, being a discussion board where users interact by posting messages on topics of interest. But there are some contextual differences as well. Traditionally, reading a news group would require a dedicated application and configuration of this program, thus making it more difficult to reach than a discussion board. This was however because Usenet existed before the WWW, and today most newsgroups are available on Google Groups with more than 1 billion searchable postings (Google 2006b). Due to its popularity when the Internet was solely populated by very computer literate people, the Usenet is viewed as a somewhat “geeky” social arena, which can be off-putting to novice users, also due to its distinctive jargon and strict rules. Regarding identity cues, it is seen as proper USENET etiquette to provide one’s real name, but identifying images are not possible due to the text-only format. It is not possible to see if a person is a long-time active user, as in web-based forums.

2.1.3.3 Web log

A web log – or “blog” – is personal website where people write about what they are interested in. It can take many forms, from an exchange student writing a diary about her experiences in a foreign country to a conglomerate of commercially oriented blogs such as Gawker Media, which covers high-interest topics ranging from consumer electronics to celebrity gossip. Common to most blogs is that the communication is directed from one person to “the world”, with a lesser degree of interaction than in discussion forums and USENET groups. A web log gives more information about the sender through an “About me” – or FAQ (frequently asked questions) page, for example, thus providing more information cues than most other kinds of eWOM. It also often contains longer texts with a more formal structure and editorial theme than discussion forum posts. There is however room for interaction, as most blogs offer visitors the ability to comment on each post. Still, the opinions and interests of the blog author is the main focus in this environment. Blogs are maybe the most easy-to-reach type of eWOM, as its popularity has exploded in the last couple of years. For example, marketing

research company Millward Brown currently tracks 80,000 blogs with Précis:cubed, its media analytics service (Howell 2005), demonstrating the commercial interest in this media channel.

2.1.3.4 Virtual opinion platforms

Virtual opinion platforms consist of databases of goods and services where customers can write reviews of each item, such as epinions.com. This kind of eWOM communication is often very relevant to the product or service, and the social community aspects are insignificant compared to most other kinds of eWOM. There are often systems for “reviewing the reviewer”, where readers can provide feedback on the quality of each review in the form points or stars. This is a very good tool in assessing the credibility of the sender, as reviews from high-rated reviewers undoubtedly are of higher value than a receiver with a bad reputation, i.e. low points or few stars. It is however important to bear in mind that WOM can have influence even when coming from people that are disliked, so the credibility of the “low stars” should not be neglected. As the focus of virtual opinion platforms is clearly on recommendations and warnings, this is the eWOM venue where it is easiest to know what to expect, and requiring the least effort to assess an opinion about the site.

2.1.3.5 Social networks

Social Network web sites are interactive in the same way as other kinds of eWOM, but the main focus is about connecting with new people, rather than discussing specific products or services. Still, it is a venue where such communication is shared and can be searched. Examples of online social networks are MySpace.com or friendster.com, which are extremely popular. In May this year, the MySpace network had 50 million US visitors (MarketWatch 2006). One of the hallmarks of such networks is the ease of acquiring new acquaintances, based on common interests and opinions. When being a member of a community based on such shared views, WOM can be especially powerful more than when just visiting an opinion platform site or blog containing consumer media about a dishwasher, for example. It has also become common for “hip” consumer brands such as clothes or record companies to have their own MySpace page, and this is

somewhat unique in the world of eWOM. Such a commercial “intrusion” would not be accepted on discussion boards or USENET, and by doing so the company’s credibility in those contexts would diminish greatly.

2.1.4 Motivations for writing and reading eWOM

As evident from the previous chapter, commercially oriented WOM has been present since the beginning of the exchange of goods and services in the marketplace. Considering the persuasive role word of mouth has in influencing consumer attitudes and purchase behaviour, creating an environment that fosters positive WOM is crucial for marketers. By being aware of what motives WOM senders have, companies can trigger those motives and increase the valuable peer-to-peer information and recommendation. Knowing why consumers seek out for WOM sources, companies can cater to the needs behind this motivation, such as focusing on the aspects that generates most risk for customers, as risk reduction has proven to be one of the main reasons for seeking WOM information (Wangenheim and Bayón 2004). Bearing in mind the differences between traditional and online WOM (eWOM) mentioned above, it is important to reveal the motivations for writing and reading eWOM compared to traditional WOM.

2.1.4.1 Writing eWOM

Dichter (1966) examined what inspired the articulation of positive WOM and found four categories:

- Product involvement (to relieve tension or excitement caused by the use of the product)
- Self enhancement (to gain attention, show connoisseurship, seek reassurance from others)
- Other involvement (to help others)
- Message involvement (to share exposure to unique or intriguing advertisement or selling appeals)

As mentioned, these categories were solely related to positive WOM. Sundaram et al. (1998) explored such motives further, separating positive and negative WOM. They found that altruism was the most prevalent motivational factor for both

positive and negative expressions of WOM. Altruism can be described as doing something for the benefit of others without expecting anything in return. This was the only category that was shared for positive and negative articulations. Their other categories for positive WOM were concurrent with Dichter's findings, but they also found that helping the company was a significant motivation. For negative WOM, they found anxiety reduction, vengeance and advice seeking as significant factors in addition to altruism.

This motivation through altruism is also found to be a strong driver for posting eWOM to forums and opinion platforms and in a study done to define the driving motives for contributing to online eWOM through forums and opinion platforms Thureau et al. (2004) divide the users into four different categories based on the motives that drive their contribution. The self-interest helpers formed the biggest category, consisting of people who ranked the economical incentives as the second most important motivations after the concern for other consumers. This group consisted of 34% of the sample. For the whole sample of 2041 users, the most important motivation for contribution was a concern for other costumers, . The second most important motivation was to help the company and the third largest motivation for contribution was advice seeking. This study was done on opinion platforms and forums where products, companies and services were discussed in a C2C setting. These results can not be transferred to some other forms of online articulations such as web logs, which have exploded in the last few years. The motivation behind the growing number of web logs is probably explained more by the recent hype of this phenomenon and people wanting to try a new trend and the increasing possibility to easily set up a web log through major commercial portals such as Microsoft's MSN network.

2.1.4.2 Reading

As receiver, the consumer uses WOM to make better purchase decisions, reduce time and convenience expenses, and reduce risk (Kotler et al. 2001, Wangenheim and Bayón 2004). Wangenheim and Bayón (2004) illustrate the relationship between different attributes regarding the sender of traditional WOM and their impact on the receiver's perception of the credibility of the message. These are attributes that decide the power of the WOM in different situations and the

likelihood of services switching. Their study describes how the characteristics of the sender and the similarity between the sender and the receiver impact the power of the WOM, and makes the power increase when the perceived similarity with the source is high. This is explained by how people believe that others with similar characteristics as them selves have similar needs and wants. In addition, a social acceptances factor will strengthen the power of the WOM and reduce the social risk associated with the purchase. This results in an increased effect of the WOM when the perceived social risk of the product is large.

Hennig-Thurau and Walsh (2003) provides a thorough examination of the motives a consumer holds for reading customer articulations online. From their research, it is found that consumers see eWOM as an important tool for making better choices and reduce search time. Only to a limited extent did social factors and the communication as a human factor account for motivations for reading like it would in an offline setting where the communication is part of a social pattern of interaction and small talk. These results are also backed by the findings of Goldsmith and Horowitz (2006), which indicated that the two major reasons why people seeked out online opinions were to be sure to maximise the benefits with as low cost as possible (value for money) together with a reduced search effort.

As this part of the literature review shows, eWOM is a complex picture with several differences from traditional WOM. The next section of the thesis will focus on how the value of word of mouth information is assessed through perceived source credibility, and how the characteristics of eWOM impact this credibility.

2.2 Source Credibility

Credibility is – like most source measures – a subjective factor possessed by the receiver of a message, and not a static quality possessed by the sender. It has been defined as a message source's perceived ability and motivation to provide accurate and truthful information (Kelman and Hovland et al. 1953). The judgment of credibility is based on several factors that demand an interpretation by the receiver, and will be heavily impacted by the knowledge and experience possessed by the receiver. This is important to remember when measuring source

credibility. But despite this subjectivity of source credibility, several dimensions have been found that impacts the credibility of a sender. These are source factors that can be measured and compared with the perceived source credibility.

One of the most obvious differences between virtual and physical WOM is of course the media the message is transferred through. This gives the receiver significantly different abilities to assess the motives and agenda of the sender, as well as a limited ability to evaluate the credibility of what he writes. In an offline environment, it is easier for the receiver to moderate the impact of the message by knowing what kind of knowledge the sender has about the product or service, and what his or her interest is in recommending a product to you. This information can be used to reduce the risk of buying a product based on recommendations from unreliable sources giving out convincing but wrong information. Further, the context in which WOM happens can be one of high expertise. Visiting a product/service related discussion forum on the web can be compared to attending a seminar or an exhibition, or even a private user group, related to the same product/service. In such physical contexts as described, the effort to attend those kinds of meetings shows interest in and quite probably knowledge about the relevant product or service, whereas the effort to write a post on a forum requires substantially less effort and can be done without getting off the couch. The two examples mentioned above show that factors concerning or surrounding the source might have different impact in eWOM than in traditional WOM. The next section will address what constitutes credibility and provide a run-through of the most paramount source factors and how an online environment impacts these factors.

2.2.1 Dimensions of credibility

The judgment of source credibility relies on the interpretation of several characteristics of the communicator or sender. As credibility is not source intrinsic but individually perceived by each receiver, identical sources can be subject to contrasting interpretations and assessments. This includes variations in the different dimensions of credibility. It is assuredly a multifaceted concept, and theorists have traditionally argued about what is the “correct” composition. Variations in factor constructs have proved that finding a unified structure is

problematic. Despite such difficulties, as research and theory on credibility has evolved, two distinct dimensions of the term have become prevalent: expertise and trustworthiness, first formulated by Kelman and Hovland (1953). The assessed expertise of the communicator describes to which degree he or she has the ability to know the truth, whereas the assessed trustworthiness relates to whether the communicator wants to tell the truth or to bias information in order to gain him- or herself.

In addition, many other dimensions of credibility have been mentioned throughout the research, including safety, qualification, and dynamism (Berlo et al. 1969), authoritativeness, sociability, character, competence, composure, and extroversion (McCroskey and Young 1981) among others. Dynamism is particularly interesting in an online environment, as it helps to explain what motivates people to express themselves in non-commercial situations on the Internet, in addition to the aspects described by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) above. The assessment of the dynamism of the communicator describes to which degree he or she is energetic, bold, or active – i.e. having a “passion” about the topic (Berlo et al. 1969). It is often used to describe quality of speeches, but can also explain what kind of people that express opinions about certain topics online. Typical for such eWOM – as defined earlier – is that the audience is unclear, as well is the exact reason for the communicator to elaborate on a certain topic. A high level of dynamism may serve as an answer to this – people passionate about something will most likely have a stronger drive for expressing their particular opinions.

2.2.2 Factors that impact credibility

2.2.2.1 Education, occupation, experience

The power of the perceived expert has been found to have a tremendous impact on what people are willing to do. In practice, this influence and willingness to comply to perceived experts is shown in the Milgram experiments where normal people inflict cruelties on others just because they are told to do so by a perceived authority (Milgram 1963). Hence, the impact of experts in an offline setting has shown to be highly significant due to the impact of an authority figure. In a WOM context Wangenheim and Bayón (2002) have established a communication model

with similarity and expertise as moderating factors for the perceived influence of the message. In this model they have also presented the financial risk and the social risk associated with the product as moderators of the impact giving more impact to the expertise if the financial risk is large and to the similarity if the social risk is large.

In an online context this impact is still present, however not in the same way. When the receiver has no physical contact with the sender, the authority impact will be greatly reduced, and the blind obedience found by Milgram (1963) will not be found. It can also be more difficult for the receiver to judge the sender's level of expertise, due to the lack of physical context and information. In many eWOM contexts, the receivers will have no information about the expertise of the sender.

2.2.2.2 Delivery characteristics

When the communicator sends a message, several factors of the actual message delivery have implications for the receiver. If the words come too fast, too slow or in the wrong order, this could influence the perception of the sender and thus impact the evaluation of the message. Exactly how the speaking rate influences the perception with regard to what direction on the credibility scale it impacts is unclear, however (O'Keefe 2002). Nevertheless, the communicator has the possibility to control these aspects of the message.

Delivery characteristics online will differ from the examples described above because of the written form of the message. This calls for an internal pacing by the reader which implies that the speed in which the message is obtained depends on the receiver. This makes the receiver able to firmly study the message word by word and conclude as he or she goes along. Because of this, the message itself gets more important and the sender cannot adjust the message to the receiver in the same way as in a face-to-face situation. Due to the lack of physical communication, it can be argued that articulation, eloquence and structure of the message is given more consideration online than in a physical setting, in which body language and speaking rate will contribute to the perception of the communicator. It is important to bear in mind that written communication can

impact the source credibility, as grammar and spelling errors are very visible cues when assessing the expertise of a sender.

A communicator can use citations of evidence sources to strengthen his message, and research shows that citation of high credibility sources will increase the credibility of the communicator as well (O'Keefe 2002). In an online environment, it will be easier for the receiver to investigate the sources cited, due to the immediate availability of hyperlinks and search engines. Hence, a communicator should be even more careful when citing sources supporting his or her message on the Internet.

2.2.2.3 Liking

In this context, liking is a general positive attitude towards, the sender of a message and has implications on how the message is being decoded by the receiver. In general it can be said that communicators who are liked by the receiver tend to have a larger effectiveness of their message than those who are not (O'Keefe 2002). But there are significant exceptions from this principle, and it is important to understand the relations between liking and the other source factors influencing the credibility. Studies have shown that the effect of liking of the source is weaker than the effect of the credibility of the source (Simons et al. 1970). This implies that the effects of liking can be eliminated by effect of credibility when there are conflicts of judgment for recipients of messages (O'Keefe 2002). To exemplify, if there is one doctor with great credibility who is disliked and another with low credibility but highly liked, the message from the credible doctor will be more effective than from the likeable doctor. Some studies also show that disliked communicators can be more effective persuaders than liked communicators, even when the communicators are comparable in other characteristics (e.g. Zimbardo et al. 1965). For word of mouth, research has shown that such communication can influence consumer decisions even from people that are disliked (Andreassen 2006).

2.2.2.4 Similarity

When talking about similarity it is the perceived similarity between the sender and the receiver of a message that is important and not the actual similarity. Such similarities will impact the credibility of the sender and thus impact the effectiveness of the communication. Communication effectiveness describes to which degree a communicator exerts influence over a receiver (Alpert and Anderson 1973). The cited researchers propose that the degree of effectiveness escalates as the source-receiver similarity escalates. Source-receiver similarity can generally be divided in to categories: structural and experiential. Structural proximity includes similarity of age, gender and other demographics, and is important in traditional face-to-face communication. For eWOM settings online, this kind of information is often not available. However, similarity in the form of knowledge about and experience with the product is often apparent, and earlier studies show that such experiential similarity also can create a sense of similarity and thus enhancing the communicator's impact on the receiver (Suitor et al. 1995). The similarity of opinions and values advocated by the sender has been found to have a great impact on the credibility (Beutler and Bergan 1991, Worthington and Atkinson 1996). Experiential similarity can more easily be determined from the information available online through the actual message, which often contains some articulation of experiences and general thoughts about the topic. Information on the web is often found by directly searching for and focusing on the topic, while offline there is often a larger context. This makes the online message – more often than offline – precise and containing more direct information about the actual topic of interest for the reader.

2.2.2.5 Gender

Even in the often-faceless environment of the Internet, gender has an impact on the perception of information. A study that presented the same personal website with men and women authors to groups of men and women found that when browsing a web site that appeared to be operated by a woman, men would give it a higher credibility score than if the same site appeared to be operated by a man. In the same study it was found that women tended to give both sites less credibility than what men did, and also somewhat surprisingly gave the female site less credibility than the male site, contradictory to the male ratings (Flanagin and

Metzger 2003). This finding goes against the principals of the structural similarity described above, because according to that logic women should have an in-group sense of similarity with other women and thus rate the credibility higher. More importantly, it suggests that the experiential similarities are more important than structural similarities in an online environment.

The reason why women unexpectedly rated the male site higher in credibility is not clearly answered with this study, but it can be proposed that because the women in the study were significantly less skilled in Internet use and had less knowledge about the media, they are more likely to view the women with enough knowledge to make their own site as dissimilar from them, not giving them the similarity bonus on the credibility ranking. For the men some of the same thoughts can be applied. Because of the woman's ability to make and operate an Internet site she will possibly be seen as "one of the guys" and then get a higher ratings with the more experienced men in the study, and obtain a similarity bonus based on the interest in Internet as a medium.

This female unwillingness to trust online information is also found in a study done on the use of online stores where women were less likely to use a online store than men (Garbarino and Strahilevitz 2004). However, if a friend recommended the store they were even more willing to try than men receiving the same recommendation from a friend. Even though this recommendation is provided through the Internet, it will not be regarded as online communication in terms of what source-factors are concerned because the sender and receiver know each other in offline terms and have the offline source factors to rely on. These findings could imply a female aversion for trusting online sources, but as mentioned in the last section it is more likely that the females in the study differ from the men on Internet expertise and thus know less about what is trustworthy and not, thereby explaining the differences on the grounds of experience rather than gender. However, these are interesting considerations, and the demographic analysis in the empirical section of this thesis will explore gender differences in perceived source credibility.

3.0 Research question and hypotheses

As shown in the literature review, there are several important differences between communication offline and on the Internet. The absence of knowledge about the sender of a message is maybe one of the most important factors that separate the regular WOM from the eWOM. The importance of trust and expertise in the offline setting has proved to impact the effect of WOM on the receiver. It has also been made clear how much of this source evaluation is being assessed from source factors that are difficult to consider from online sources. In the offline setting the source factors will impact the evaluation of the sources credibility and thus impact the message but how will people evaluate credibility when the source factors and information about the source are limited or none existing, and how does this again impact the effect the message has on the receiver? This is the question explored in this thesis by trying to answer the research question below:

How does the level of source information as a source factor impact perceived source credibility and moderate the effect of attitude change in electronic word of mouth?

As described in the literature review, a source that gives the impression of being an expert and thus is perceived as an authority will increase the impact of a message and make people believe in the content of the message, thus displaying credibility. Several studies have found this connection and also found that the evaluation of the source affects the impact of the message, and not the other way around (O'Keefe 2002). This happens even if the receiver of the message disagrees with or dislikes the message sent from the sender with perceived authority given them by the expression of expertise. In the classic Milgram experiments concerning obedience to authorities, the inclination to believe in experts was shown to an almost extreme level, with normal people obeying men perceived to have authority as professors and doctors, giving other people high enough electrocution to kill them and ignoring the screams from the victims (Milgram 1963). This shows that the power of perceived authority is not only based on the presentation and content of the message, but just as important by how the source presents it self before the message is delivered. In an eWOM context, the ability of the source to present it self and to time the presentation is limited, due to the internal pacing of the recipient. Hence, H₁ will explore if the

sender is perceived to be more believable when he or she has more information with which to evaluate the expertise compared to providing no sender information. These two stimuli will contain identical messages, but the expert sender will be presented with a real name, a photograph, and profession information, whereas the unidentified sender will just have a generic icon and a nickname.

This gives us H₁:

H₁: Respondents will rate the source credibility from what they know about the source and not from the message.

Furthermore, this study will explore the impact of the message and its relationship with the perceived credibility of the source. In the Milgram studies, the perceived expertise of the professors giving the inhumane orders made them able to convince the participants because of the authority they got from the expertise they displayed. This perceived authority gave them the credibility they needed to make people do things they would not have done if anyone with less expertise and authority had given the orders. Wangenheim and Bayón (2002) provide a communication model for WOM with expertise and similarity as sender characteristics that impact the perceived influence of the message. They also link the two source characteristics to different types of risk associated with the product, similarity with social risk and expertise with financial risk. As financial risk will be most relevant for the camera, the source's perceived expertise will be the largest influence on the source evaluation. The prediction from this is that the people receiving the high information eWOM stimuli will to a larger extent be impacted by the message and thus rate the camera higher. This gives us H₂:

H₂: Respondents receiving eWOM from a credible source will be more impacted by the message than respondents receiving eWOM from a less credible source.

The relationship between the evaluation of the source and the expertise of the receiver will also be explored. According to Day (1972) the knowledge of the receiver will moderate the impact of WOM information. O'Keefe (2002) also supports these findings and states that people with more knowledge about the

topic will be harder to influence and also less impacted by other source factors such as expertise and liking. Thus, it is possible to predict that the receivers' self-reported level of knowledge will moderate the evaluation of the source and thus cause the evaluation of the camera to be lower than the ones with less knowledge. This gives us H_{3a} and H_{3b}.

H_{3a}: Respondents with a high level of self-reported knowledge will regard the source as less credible than other respondents.

H_{3b}: Respondents with high level of self-reported knowledge will have a lower evaluation of the camera than those with low knowledge.

4.0 Methodology

The objective of the study is to measure the effect of changed stimuli on the respondents' evaluation of a product and the evaluation of the message sender. This will be done in an experiment where four different groups will be exposed to different stimuli. The differences between these groups will then be compared to establish a foundation for assessing the hypotheses and give a foundation for future research in the field of eWOM and source factors online.

4.1 Research design

The research design is a set of rules and guidances to how the collection, analyses and interpretation of a study should be conducted (Nachmias and Nachmias 1996: 597) and is used to give the study the rigidity required to gain validity and exclude random factors from interfering with the results.

As reflected in the hypotheses, the aim of this thesis is to find how one variable causes a change in the reaction from the respondent, and to isolate the cause of this change in order to answer the research question. This will be done in a causal research design, which makes it possible to manipulate the stimuli in a controlled experiment. The experiment design also provides the possibility of controlling other factors that could moderate the outcome of the research by introducing

control groups to eliminate these moderators. As the topic is about source factors and attitude, this includes several factors that people may not be aware of and thus will have problems reporting in a regular quantitative survey. Further, if asked directly about source factors, the respondents might alter their own attitude accordingly, as they in that situation would be asked to reflect on their own attitude towards different sources.. This would threaten the result produced and eliminate the validity of the study.

Several unconscious elements must be measured in this study to find what the research question is looking for. Examples of this are the perceived factors measured about the source. These are factors that could easily be results of causal inference or general covariance with other factors. As indicated in the theoretical review earlier a factor like knowledge about the product can work as a moderator and covariate with the evaluation of the source. If a general questionnaire were conducted it would be hard, if not impossible, to determine if it was the source factors of the message source or the knowledge level that produced the results. By conducting an experiment, the knowledge level can be isolated and its impact can be measured by comparing the groups to see if the knowledge levels differ from group to group.

One usual problem is that when faced with questionnaires, people will think differently and maybe more critically about their thought process, and they will be conscious of being measured. This could alter the way source factors impact them and give results that are not valid for other situations. Further, the chances that the results are spurious and caused by something else than what the research wants to measure will also have the potential to warp the results. An example of this could be if the study wants to determine whether the text provided in the eWOM example or the source factors provided with the text are the cause of the source evaluation variations.

To sum up: To eliminate other factors from being the cause of the measured changes in the evaluations, control over the other factors is needed. To gain this control an experiment will provide the opportunities to rule out co-variations and enable the source factors provided to be isolated as the variable factor and thus the cause of any change found.

4.2 Method

The study will be conducted in two parts, consisting of a qualitative pre-study the purpose of which is to give the information needed to build the second and quantitative part of the study, which is where the hypotheses will be tested.

4.2.1 Qualitative pre-study

To determine what attributes people evaluated in a digital camera, a qualitative pre-study was conducted. In order to present and measure relevant specifications it is crucial to have knowledge about what the costumers consider when they are evaluating a camera. Measuring the wrong features instead of the features the respondents would normally put weight on could cause the experiment to measure fictional changes as the respondents lack an impression of the attributes they are asked to evaluate.

To find these attributes an interview with Erik Faarlund, the editor of *akam.no*, was conducted. Faarlund tests new digital cameras and writes reviews posted on the editorial parts of *akam.no*. He also keeps in close touch with the audience through participation in the forums and has a good overview of what features the forum users discuss and emphasize. To confirm the results from this interview, field observations of camera advertisements in different camera stores were conducted, with the assumption that the manufacturers emphasize the features most important to consumers for evaluating the cameras in the stores. These findings were further supported by secondary literature (Twiss 2005) where Philip Scott from Kodak points to mega pixels, ease of use, size of LCD screen and size of the camera as the driving features of sales also in the period to come.

4.2.2 Quantitative study

The main part of the study is a quantitative study consisting of an experiment based questionnaire measuring two different groups with two control groups, making a total of four groups. The purpose of the two main groups is to see how the change in stimuli changes the attitude to the source, the product and to see what other factors, like knowledge, that moderate this effect. The text they receive

for reading in addition to the advertising is the same but presented by two different sources, one with more information than the other. The respondents in the control group only receive the advertising and are not asked to evaluate the sender of this message. This group will work as a benchmark to see what differences have been caused by the added stimuli in the other groups. The second group will in addition to the advertising receive a generic text about cameras with no direct recommendation regarding the chosen camera model or its specifications. This group will be used as a controller for the effect of two stimuli to see if the repeated reading about cameras affect the outcome of the questionnaire and see if people who receive more specific recommendations are more affected by the message. This group will not be asked to rate the sender of the message because this is irrelevant to the research questions and hypotheses.

4.2.2.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire (see appendix 4) was sent out with four different variations of the information. The questions were the same for all groups except for the low and high information groups who in addition received questions about the source of the stimuli.

The questionnaire is divided into four and five categories for the different groups. These are: demographic, information search and use, camera evaluations, source evaluations (only for low and high information groups) and digital camera information search preferences. Questions 1,2 and 3 asked about the respondents' demographics, questions 4 and 5 about the use on Internet and information search habits, question 6 covered the interest and relationship to digital cameras, question 7 dealt with general attitude to advertising, questions 8,9 and 10 asked for the evaluation of the camera presented, question 11 asked the high and low information groups to evaluate the source, question 12 asked about the preferred place to search for digital camera information.

4.2.2.1.1 Demographics

The main demographical group wanted for this study is the parts of the population who are regular Internet users with some experience with the medium. This is

because the respondents are expected to know what a forum is and being used to read and use online consumer articulation. It also makes it possible to rule out experience with Internet as a likely moderator of differences found between groups later. Gender is an important part of the demographic part of the survey. The respondents will be divided randomly and men and women will be spread in all four groups to find differences in reaction and evaluation of the stimuli. Preferably, men and women will differ as little as possible on other demographic variables to eliminate these as moderators. Studies of differences in online information use and credibility have been done before, but usually the women have had significantly less experience with the online medium and thus it has been difficult to establish a firm theory. An example of this is the mentioned study by Flanagin and Metzger (2003) where differences were found between the genders but because of the significant difference in experience with Internet, establishing a solid conclusion proved difficult.

Another demographic variable that can work as a moderator is the age factor, because web literacy is often correlated with age. However, this is often also caused by the difference in experience with the Internet. Age will be monitored in this study to see if it causes differences between the groups but this is not expected if there is a not difference in experience level between the age groups. Due to the sampling procedure the sample is expected to be experienced and in the same age group.

The last demographic variable measured in the questionnaire is the occupation. The respondent occupation will be categorised in the same categories used on Finn.no, one of the largest work distribution sites in Norway, and consists of 27 different fields of work (see appendix 4).

4.2.2.1.2 Use of information sources

To see if experience with different information sources impacts the evaluation of the source the respondents will rate how much they use the Internet, papers, magazines, editorial web sites, blogs, forums and friends to search for information. The experience with one or the other of this information sources may

impact the evaluation of the eWOM, and this can be controlled for by comparing the respondents on information search habits and source evaluations.

4.2.2.1.3 Choice of eWOM category

As mentioned in the literature review, there are several different forms of eWOM and many other forms of online information. In this study the medium of online discussion forums were used as the source of the eWOM. This was chosen because this is one of the most common ways for consumers to engage in C2C conversations about products independent from any commercial source, and is practical for manipulating the sender of the eWOM. As mentioned in the typology of eWOM the forums and discussion boards are places where people seek out relevant unbiased product information close to the purchase situation to save time and reduce the potential risk associated with the purchase (Hennig-Thurau and Walsh 2003). It is also usually short and to-the-point information as a response to a question from another user. This is also how it was presented in the two stimuli (see appendix 2 and 3). The stimulus consists of a mock discussion around a question and an answer, which is where the information about the camera is presented. This is presented as a computer screen shot to the respondents making a plausible scene of the discussion, as it would look in the actual forum. The mock forum discussion creates the space needed to manipulate the information presented by the source and present it in a way familiar to people who have read information in an Internet forum on a previous occasion.

4.2.2.2 Type of example product

What the product is in this experiment is not of critical importance, but it needs to have some attributes that engage the respondents in a search for information. It cannot have too simple specifications and be too familiar for the respondent because this would eliminate the need for information through the eWOM and might cause the respondent to pay little attention to what the eWOM says about the product. It can also be too complex and have too intricate qualities. This could cause the respondent to lose interest and not be able to decide whether it is good or bad. The product should be from a category that is familiar to the respondent but be advanced enough to cause some information gaps that the respondent

would fill with an online information search. The attributes of different products can be divided into three subgroups based on how the quality of the different attributes can be acquired. These three groups are search, experience and credence attributes (Kotler 2001). The optimal product for this study will contain several different search and experience attributes and few credence attributes because the latter type is vague and difficult to address. This is why the digital camera was chosen as a product as most people know about the cameras and have some background for judging whether it is good or not, and it involves both search and experience attributes.

4.2.2.2.1 Search attributes

The search attributes of a product are the features that can easily be assessed by looking at the specifications of the product. These can be attributes such as weight, length or power. For a digital camera this will be megapixels, battery capacity, and precise camera size. These are all addressed in the advertising and can be evaluated to a large extent just from the specifications.

4.2.2.2.2 Experience attributes

The experience attributes are attributes that can only be assessed after the usage of the product. This can include different qualities that also will be subject to personal evaluation from the consumer and can be evaluated very differently from consumer to consumer. This would generally include taste, smell, feel, sound, picture quality, and so on. For the digital camera this will be the ease of use, the actual picture quality as a result of the optics and mega pixels and what it feels like in the hand. These are features that have both search and experience attributes as the size has a factual size in form of the actual measures but the perceived size as it rests in the hand will be an experience attribute.

4.2.2.2.3 Credence attributes

Credence attributes are the attributes of a product that are hard or impossible to assess even after consumption. This can include insurance, consultancy or car tune-ups. It is difficult to know if insurance purchased is any good if nothing

breaks or is lost. For a digital camera this can include qualities as picture quality. For a person without extensive knowledge about photography it can be difficult to blame the camera if something is out of focus or a bit blurry. Many other aspects like wrong lighting or shaking hands can cause unexpected results. But digital cameras consist most of experience and search attributes that can be measured before and after use. This is why the digital camera was used in this study.

4.2.2.3 Scale types

In the questionnaire two types of scales will be used in addition to the normal demographic measures. The camera attitude and the attitude toward advertising were measured on a seven point Likert scale, which is a well known method design for measuring attitude (Nachmias and Nachmias 1996). The scale will be seven points to give the questions are formed as attitudes towards the different features of the camera and the use of advertising, and the respondents the possibility to cross of a natural middle value and not force them to take stand towards positive or negative. The questions are formed as attitudes towards the different features of the camera and the use of advertising, and the respondent were asked to agree or disagree on a scale from one to seven. The questions about use of different media in information search were measured on scales from one to seven where one was not used at all and seven was used frequently.

To measure the source credibility, the scales used by Sternthal et al. (1978) were adapted into Norwegian to ensure a validated tool for measuring. This measure rates the source on six different scales and uses these six measures to evaluate expertise and trustworthiness of the sources. The three factors measuring expertise are expert or not, trained or not and experienced or not. Trustworthiness is measured by asking if the source is kind or not, moral or not and believable or not. These factors were translated into Norwegian and measured on a seven point semantic differential scale by the two groups receiving eWOM examples.

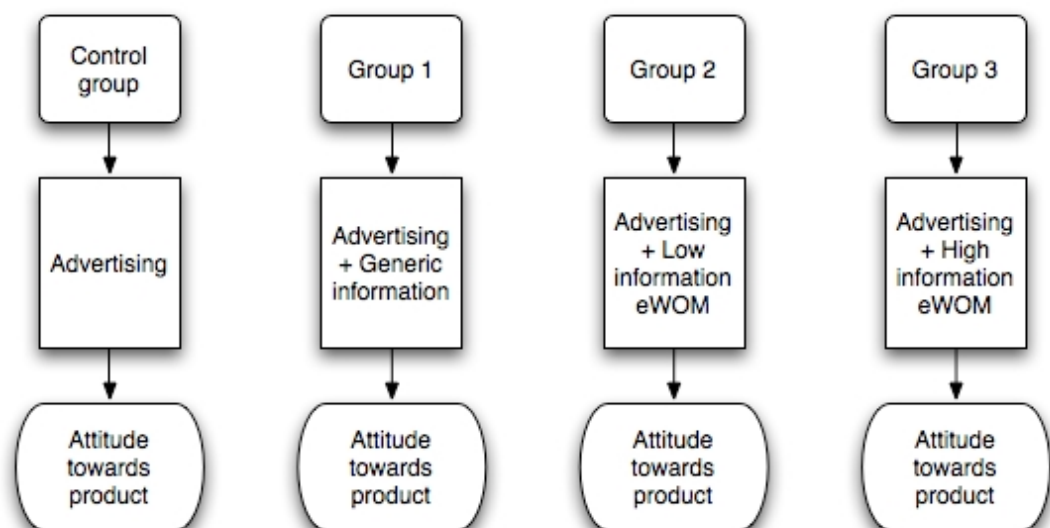
4.3 Sample

The sample was drawn from the defined population of Norwegian Internet users. It was done as a convenience sample through a snowball selection of respondents.

This is done because of the constraints and scope of the available research. Also, because this is a relatively new field of study, the objective is to find a lead to how the connection between information about sender and attitude changes, and it does not strive to define differences in effect on different segments of the population, all though this would be a natural continuance of these studies. The sample was collected in two phases with the first stage being an email requesting participation to friends, students and other available email addresses and a request to forward the request on to friends. The second phase was the posting of the requests on Internet forums – with the approval of the forum owner or moderator – requesting readers to participate.

When the respondents were collected they were divided randomly into four groups as shown below with one control group to see changes in attitude caused by the added stimuli in the three other groups. Group one controls for the effect of two stimuli by adding a generic text about cameras, and group two and three constitute the real experiment with the same information presented by one source with little information in group two and one presented with more information about background in group three.

Figure 1: Groups



4.4 Tests and statistics

The analysis will compare different groups of respondents with regard to camera evaluations and source evaluations. The whole sample will be used to analyse everything except differences in source evaluations where only the low information (Group 3) and high information (Group 4) groups will be used. The comparison will be done with one-way ANOVA tests and mean comparison through SPSS. The significance level will be set at 0,05 but results below 0,1 will be commented as directional.

4.5 Validity and reliability

Validity is the term used for measuring instruments reflecting the extent to which differences in scores on the measurement reflect true differences among individuals, groups or situations in the characteristics that it seeks to measure, or reflects true differences in the same individual, group or situation from one occasion to another, rather than constant or random errors (Churchill and Iacobucci 2005: 681). In other words how good one is measuring what one wants to measure (Hair et al. 1998). Reliability is defined as the ability of a measure to obtain similar scores for the same object, trait, or construct across time, across different evaluators, or across the items forming the measure (Churchill and Brown 2005: 335). In other words how good one is measuring what one wants to measure (Hair et al. 1998). To conclude, validity is to which degree the factors that are intended to be measured really are measured and reliability is if what is measured is measured in a good way.

4.5.1 Validity and reliability of the questionnaire

The questionnaire is composed of four or five parts dependent on what group the respondents are from. The first part involves questions about demographics. These measures have small challenges regarding validity and reliability. The second part consisting of questions regarding information search habits also have little room for validity and reliability issues, the only problem is the respondents have to self report the use of different medias for search. But because this not can be seen as sensitive information the measures are expected to be accurate. The third part is questions about involvement with digital cameras. This measure has not been pre

tested and this could be a threat to the validity, but it does have high face validity as they have been seen to cover the involvement in a good way by Hans Mathias Thjømmøe. The fourth part of the questionnaire is the measures of attitude towards the digital camera. This measure has not been pre tested or used in other studies. This could threaten its validity but to reduce this risk to a large extent they were developed through the pre -study in cooperation with expertise from akam.no, giving them face validity. The last part of the questionnaire, the part concerning source evaluations, was adopted from validated measures developed by Sternthal et al. (1978). These are measures validated in their studies. They were translated with the help of a professional translator to ensure the wording would remain the same. Because a well-known scale was used, and the alphas were high, one can assume a high validity as well as reliability on these measures.

To sum up, the questionnaire has a good content validity from the face validity, and a good reliability from the pre-study to ensure it measured the relevant attributes in the camera. The scales used in the measuring of source evaluations are validated in other studies and are expected to produce valid results also after translation. The questionnaire has not been pre tested, something that can reduce the validity.

4.5.2 Validity and reliability of the sample

When relying on respondents self-reporting there is always a chance that they cross off values different from the truth. This can be a result of different factors, one being self-interest. By crossing off what looks best or what seems right the respondent will give a false measure and threaten the validity of the study. This is specially a problem if the questions are of a personal nature or some answers are more flattering to the respondent than others. In this study the questions are not of a personal nature or in other ways of a nature that could tempt the respondents to cross off something else than what they think and believe. But even if the respondents intend to answer truthfully there can be gaps between the answer and the truth due to lack of insight from the respondent. This is why factors like knowledge about cameras will only be mentioned as self-reported knowledge and not true knowledge about cameras.

Another thing that can make respondent cross off answers that do not reflect the truth is random crossing from the respondent just to get through the questionnaire. The risk for such unmotivated answering has been minimised by asking respondents beforehand if they would answer the questionnaire, and then sending them the questionnaire later. Questions have also been included about similar topics in the beginning and end of the questionnaire to see if there are correlations where there obviously should be to see if people have crossed at random or not.

To find differences between the two groups caused by the changed stimuli it is also crucial that the groups are as homogeneous as possible to eliminate other factors from moderating the changes. By dividing the groups from the same sample by complete random there is no reason why the groups should have differences that should prove significant.

5.0 Analysis and discussion

5.1 Demographics

In the first stage of the analysis the four groups were analyzed to see if they had significant differences that could affect the outcome of the source and camera evaluations. The first comparison was on the demographic variables of age, gender, and occupation. This was done by comparing the four groups in a one-way ANOVA test. This showed neither significant nor directional differences between the groups on the demographic variables. The compositions of the groups with regard to the demographic variables are displayed bellow.

Table 1: *Age*

Stimuli	18-20	21-25	26-30	31+	Total
Generic info	3	14	6	10	33
Ad only	1	14	9	7	31
Low info eWOM	1	21	4	4	30
High info eWOM	3	18	8	6	35
Total	8	67	27	27	129

Table 2: *Gender*

Stimuli	Female	Male	Total
Generic info	8	25	33
Ad only	10	21	31
Low info eWOM	8	22	30
High info eWOM	15	20	35
Total	41	88	129

The information search habits of the respondents were then analyzed to see if there were different patterns of info search in the four groups that could moderate the impression of the camera and source evaluation. This was done in the same manner as the demographic variables with a one-way ANOVA test. The means are shown below.

Table 3: Information search

Stimuli	Internet	Papers	Magazines	Editorial web sites	Blogs	Forums	Friends
Generic info	1,06	4,55	4,18	5,48	2,45	3,97	4,91
Ad only	1,03	3,61	3,87	5,13	2,71	4,06	5,32
Low info eWOM	1,07	3,4	2,73	5,13	2,43	3,53	5,03
High info eWOM	1,03	4,37	3,8	4,89	2,09	2,83	5,23
Total	1,05	4,01	3,67	5,16	2,41	3,58	5,12

When running a one-way ANOVA on the search habits compared to what stimuli the respondents' received, some significant differences were found. The low information group was found to have a significantly lower use of papers than the high information group and the generic stimuli group. Significant differences in the use of forums were also found, the high information group showing a significantly lower use of forums than the ad only and generic stimuli groups. The final significant difference was found in the use of magazines, the low information group showing a significantly lower use of magazines than all the other groups.

Finally the attitude towards digital cameras and the attitude to advertising were analyzed to expose the last of the potential differences between the groups. The only significant differences in these factors were between the high information group and the generic group, where the generic group showed a significantly

higher score on interest and knowledge about digital cameras. No other significant differences were found.

Table 4: *Attitude towards digital cameras*

Stimuli	How interested are you in digital cameras?	How important is digital cameras for to you?	How knowledgeable are you about cameras?
Generic info	5,09	5,27	4,52
Ad only	4,68	4,94	4,32
Low info eWOM	4,27	4,6	3,9
High info eWOM	4,54	4,63	3,71
Total	4,65	4,86	4,11

Regarding the attitude to advertising no significant differences were found between the groups at all.

Table 5: *Attitude to advertising*

Stimuli	How useful is advertising?	How truthful is advertising?	Do you use advertising to separate products?
Generic info	3,7	3,39	2,45
Ad only	3,29	3,16	2,48
Low info eWOM	3,03	2,83	2,3
High info eWOM	3,31	3	2,26
Total	3,34	3,1	2,37

5.1.1 Implications of differences

Regarding most of the differences found between the groups, they will not impact the outcome of the evaluation of the source or the evaluation of the camera. This is because the use of neither magazines nor papers was found to have any moderating effect on the two evaluations, and only inconsistent differences were found in the relationship between the use of forums and the evaluation of the source. As knowledge was found to moderate the evaluation of the source, as described further later in the analysis, this difference could have been a problem in the validity of the results. But because the difference only was significant between the high information group and the generic group this problem is neglect

able as the generic group is not asked to evaluate the source of the information. So to sum up: The composition of the groups will not moderate the results to any extent, and the findings will be a result of the different stimuli provided and not the differences in the respondents of the groups.

5.2 Evaluation of source (testing and discussion of H_1)

H_1 : Respondents will rate the source credibility based on what they know about the source and not the message.

In the second stage of the analysis the low information and high information groups were isolated to see if there were differences in the evaluation of source credibility. The difference was found to be significant in the evaluation of expertise (.001), experience (.011), training (.000) and trustworthiness (.001). This showed that the source with more information was rated significantly higher on all the expertise dimensions of source credibility. In the evaluation of the trust qualities, only trustworthiness caused significant differences between the two groups. This gives support to H_2 , and indicates that the receiver of the message gives more evaluation to what he knows about the source than what the source actually says. This conclusion can be drawn because the two groups read the same text and still the evaluation of the sources knowledge was significantly different. These findings reflect on similar findings in offline situations where expression of authority is evaluated from signals and facts from the sender and not the quality of the message. An example of this is the studies of Milgram where men posing as professors and doctors could make people do things no regular man would do, even if the words used was the same. It is also reflected in Cialdini's (2001) six principles of persuasion where authority is one way of influencing people and giving the message sent more impact. This authority is often given the source because of a perceived expertise as mentioned earlier in connection with the Milgram studies.

5.3 Influence on camera-evaluation (H_2 ?)

H_2 : Respondents receiving eWOM from a credible source will be more impacted by the message than respondents receiving eWOM from a less credible source.

The influence of the stimuli on the perception of the cameras quality was then analyzed. All four groups were compared to see differences in the two eWOM groups and compare them to the two other groups as well. Following is the results for each of the attributes the camera was rated on.

5.3.1 Camera resolution (mega pixels)

When comparing the different groups in the evaluation of the camera's mega pixels several significant differences were found but the results were not as expected. The low information group showed a significantly ($.012$) higher evaluation of the mega pixels than the ones who received no stimuli (6,33 vs. 5,45). This makes sense when the eWOM source stated that the quality of the mega pixels was good, in addition to the factual number of mega pixels provided in the advertising.

5.3.2 Camera optics

In the evaluation of the cameras optic the respondents who received generic information ranged the optics significantly ($.016$) higher (5,76 vs. 5) than the respondents who didn't receive a stimuli other than the advertising with the specifications. There are also directional results ($.054$) that the generic respondents rate the optic higher than the high credibility respondents (5,76 vs. 5,53). In addition when comparing the low credibility respondents with the no stimuli respondents there are directional results ($.096$) that the low credibility respondents have ranged the optic better than no stimuli respondents (5 vs. 5,53). This is probably caused by the generic focus on optic and explanation of its importance in the generic stimuli and the mention in the eWOM examples.

5.3.3 Camera size

For the evaluation of the cameras size there are only directional results. The high information respondents have rated the size highest (5,09 vs. average of 4,69), but the difference is only directional differences for high credibility vs. no stimuli ($.06$) and generic stimuli ($.07$). This could indicate that the more specific information in the eWOM from a user of the camera is given more credibility than

the more general information given in the generic information and the factual size given in the no information group. It also indicates that features people have less ability to evaluate from pure specifications are more sensitive to eWOM than features that are easier to evaluate from the specifications. This would need further research to assess conclusively, but the actual size is likely to differ from the perceived size is because of the design and how it works in the hands of the user and thus gives more credibility and impact from a source that claims to have used the product.

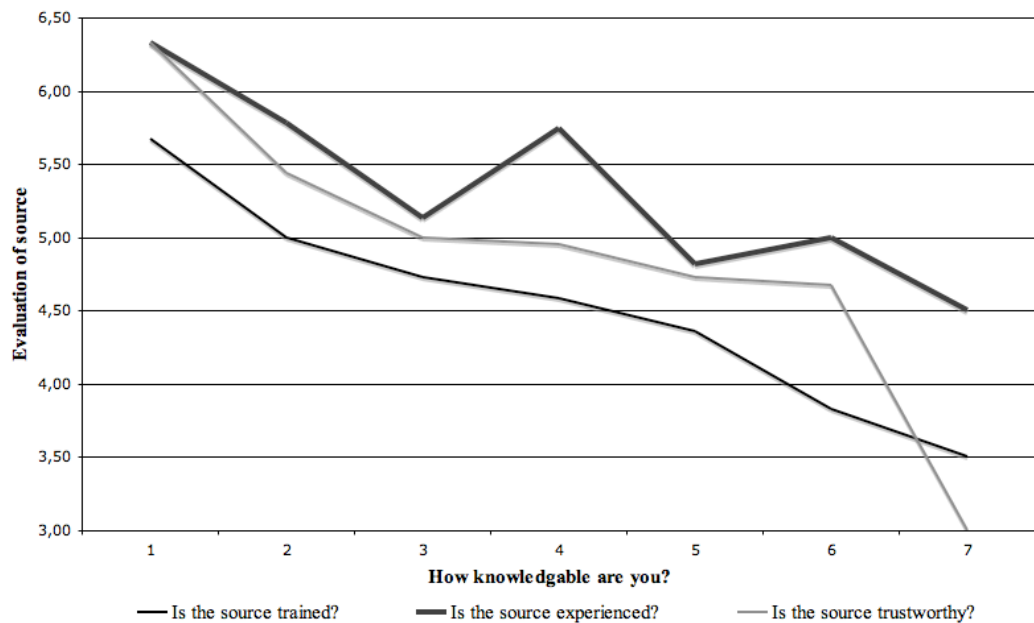
5.4 Self-reported knowledge

5.4.1 Impact on source evaluation (H_{3a})

H_{3a}: Respondents with a high level of self-reported knowledge will regard the source as less credible than other respondents.

This analysis compared the self-reported knowledge of the respondents with how they viewed the source's capabilities and how much they trusted the source. The assumption made in H_{3a} was that people with more knowledge about cameras would be more critical to the source and rate the source lower. This did show significant results when the respondents' expertise was compared with the rating given the source on training. The difference is only significant on a 0,05 level for the ones who rate themselves with 7 on knowledge and the ones who rate themselves on 1 (,018) or 2 (,041) but it is highly directional for 7 vs. 3 (,08) and 4 (,085). On the other evaluations of the source it can be found, by comparing the means for the group, that there is a reversed linear connection between how high people rate their own knowledge and the trustworthiness they give the source. This is illustrated in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Impact of knowledge on source evaluation



5.4.2 Influence on camera evaluation (H_{3b})

H_{3b}: Respondents with high self-reported knowledge will have a lower evaluation of the camera than those with low knowledge.

The prediction in H_{3b} was that respondents with high self-reported knowledge would have a lower evaluation of the camera than those with low knowledge. This can be stated because of the lowered evaluation of the source and thus the predicted lower impact of the eWOM. This was not confirmed in the analysis. The difference in evaluation of the camera caused by the level of knowledge was only significant for the respondents who rated themselves 7 on knowledge vs. the ones who rated themselves 5 (,043) and 2 (,022) and directional for 7 vs. 4 (,098) and 3 (,069) on the evaluation of the camera mega pixels. For the other attributes of the camera no consistent results were found. This could mean two things, first the lowered evaluation of the source has little or no effect on the impact of the eWOM or, more likely, the people with much knowledge about digital cameras would have rated the camera high on all attributes by evaluating the specifications themselves. These results might have been stronger if the advice from the eWOM was bad and not in line with the quality of the camera.

5.5 Gender differences

As mentioned in the literature review, it was expected to find some differences between the male and female respondents in the evaluation of the source. Flanagin and Metzger (2003) show how women have a higher evaluation of the sender trustworthiness when the sender is a man and if our findings are consistent with that, the women will rate the source higher on the expertise and the trust variables. The high information group received the eWOM from a clearly male source and the low information group received the eWOM from a source with a male nickname ("Fry", which is a male character from the animated series *Futurama*).

The groups were controlled for differences in the respondents' gender. The difference in the number of females receiving the different stimuli showed to be far from significant. In fact the group with the least female respondents were the high information group so this has not impacted the results. The significant differences found between the genders that could impact the results were in the use of forums and the knowledge about cameras, where men answered significantly higher than the women. But regarding the use of forums, there were no consistent indications that this impacted the evaluation of the eWOM, so this can be ruled out as a moderator of the gender differences found.

Table 6: Gender and camera-evaluation

Gender	Megapixels	Ease of use	Optics	Battery	Size	Zoom
Female	5,56	5,1	5	4,63	4,61	5,15
Male	6,01	4,92	5,53	5,23	4,73	5,42
Sig.	0,084	0,422	0,025	0,013	0,65	0,273

Table 7: Gender and source evaluation

Gender	Expert	Experienced	Trained	Trustworthy	Moral	Kind
Female	5,39	5,87	5,13	5,52	5,39	3,43
Male	4,4	5,1	4,29	4,67	4,86	3,36
Sig.	0,008	0,006	0,018	0,028	0,056	0,835

It is also noticeable that the females are more impacted by the change in stimuli than men. This conclusion can be drawn by reviewing the significance levels of the comparison between gender and source evaluations. By running the ANOVA test with only one gender at the time the significance levels between the high information group and the low information group is shown bellow.

Table 8: Gender and source information impact

Gender	Expert	Experienced	Trained	Trustworthy	Moral	Kind
Female	0,01	0,014	0,068	0,019	0,316	0,379
Male	0,033	0,163	0,011	0,076	0,641	0,599

This would indicate that women not only are more trusting in their evaluation of C2C recommendations but also more impacted by the increased information provided in the high information eWOM and showed a larger increase in source evaluation than men.

6.0 Conclusion

Although not all of the hypotheses gained enough support to avoid rejection some main conclusions can be drawn from the analysis. The main finding was with regard to evaluations of the source and information provided. H_1 received significant support when the high information source was rated significantly higher on all evaluation criteria except kindness and morale. These were also the two factors that would be most difficult to assess from the information provided. In addition to being lower on all evaluations of the source, the low information eWOM group is only scientifically different from 4 (the middle value) in their evaluation of experience. This implies a failure to define the source in any direction based only on the message. As a result of these strong differences between the high and low information groups it is possible to test H_2 . From the analysis of the camera evaluation with regard to the stimuli received the results were not as clear as expected. The only consistent result was that the ad-only group ranked the camera lowest on all features except the battery capacity, being significantly different from the low information group on mega pixels and from the generic information group on camera optics, and directionally lower than the high information group on camera size. From these results H_2 is not supported. The only conclusion that can be drawn from the results is that one added stimulus from an uncommercial source can impact the product evaluation because of the differences found between ad-only and the other groups, but this is just an indication and would need further verification.

Another significant finding supported hypothesis H_{3a} . The assumption about knowledge as a moderator of source evaluation proved significant when

comparing the respondent that rated him- or herself with 7 on knowledge with those who crossed off 1 or 2 on knowledge. Directional results were also found for 3 and 4. This is in line with cited research and shows how product category knowledge moderates the evaluation of the sender of the message. The increased knowledge made the respondents more sceptical to the expertise and training of the source independent of what stimuli they received. This implies that H_{3a} was supported.

In H_{3b} the impact of knowledge on the camera evaluations were measured. The camera was designed to appear as “too good to be true” in the advertising with unusually high mega pixels and overall good specifications. The doubt this “too good to be true” factor should release was supposed to be moderated by the eWOM and, as predicted in H₂, the impact of the eWOM would be stronger if the credibility was high. Following this logic, the decrease in credibility with regard to the source of the eWOM caused by higher knowledge should result in less impact of the eWOM and thus a lower evaluation of the camera. But, on the contrary, the respondents with the highest knowledge showed higher evaluations of the camera than those with low knowledge in regard to the camera’s mega pixels and on optics. This could probably be explained by looking at the specifications of the camera. A person with a high degree of knowledge is likely to know that 9.3 mega pixels is higher than required in a usual compact hand camera and to recognise the brand name Carl Zeiss in the optics and thus rate these features high without the extra recommendation from the eWOM.

6.1 Managerial implications

The most important finding for managers and marketing people is the moderating effect of knowledge of the product category. Even though the effect of source credibility on the impact of the eWOM failed to prove significant in this study this effect has been proven in other studies concerning WOM (Brooks’ 1957, Arndt 1967, Day 1972, Kotler 2001, East et al. 2005) and can most likely be proven in an online setting if the number of control groups and respondents are larger than in this study. By increasing the general costumers’ knowledge of the products they will also make them more resistant to eWOM and help to reduce the threat of negative eWOM. Negative WOM has been documented to spread quicker than

positive WOM making it a fearful phenomenon to marketers who cannot grant sufficient customer satisfaction, and a two-edged sword as informal discussions among consumers can make or break a product (Helm 2000). Because of this and the fact that to gain control over the flow of WOM is impossible for any company the focus on the few things that can limit the impact would be of high importance.

Another finding in this study that should be utilised is the effect the increased information about the sender had on source credibility. To monitor the online C2C communication can give companies a good insight into the market and see how their products are received and evaluated, but to fully understand the power of such eWOM there need to be a categorisation system in place to assess the strength of the various posting and measure the threat they represent. As the results of this study show, the amount of information presented by the source of the eWOM about him- or herself will impact the overall power of the message and the impact it will have on the readers. In an evaluation of the magnitude of eWOM, this should be a factor dividing the eWOM into different categories of impact. If there is an overweight of postings made by people who present themselves with much information this would be better (or worse, if the eWOM is negative) for the company than if most of the postings are made by people without any sender information.

A third implication is the results from the gender comparisons. The female respondents rated the source credibility higher than the men but at the same time rated the camera lower. This indicates that women are less impacted by positive eWOM, even if they see the source as a credible source of information. This is important to consider when assessing the potential of eWOM for a company with a large share of female costumers.

7.0 Weaknesses and limitations

The small differences in attitude towards the camera found between the groups can partly be explained by the high degree of knowledge about the product category, something that has shown to be moderating the impact of regular WOM (Day 1972), and here probably moderated the effect of the eWOM.

The study was limited by several factors, one of them being the size of the sample and the number of groups this enabled to include. A far more complete picture could have been drawn had it been controlled for more factors, and exposing several more groups to different stimuli and products.. The product presented was predicted to be perceived as “too good to be true” and to give the respondent a concern that it was an unknown brand of low quality, thus fostering the need to and seek advice in the eWOM for confirmation. Even if the high information group had a higher mean evaluation of the camera on all factors except the optics this difference is not large enough to prove significant. The difference could possibly have had a significant difference with a larger sample.

Another weakness of the study is that the sample consists of people who all but a few use the Internet to search for information daily. This could impact their evaluation of the source and moderate the impact because of their previous knowledge and training in evaluating eWOM sources.

7.1.1 Deviation from population

A limitation regarding the demographics of the sample is some deviation from the actual population. The most significant difference is the gender relation. In the sample only 32% of the respondents are female while amongst Norwegian Internet users about 45% are female (SSB 2005). This makes the sample less representative for the population. But the study still has enough female respondents to get significant differences between the genders. Regarding the age, the sample is in line with the largest group of Internet users as about 70% of the age group 20-34 are Internet users (SSB 2005).

7.2 Suggestions for further research

The rapid development of the World Wide Web and the changing demographics of the general users call for extensive future research and continuous updates of older research. Internet users as a group is becoming less homogeneous and new

groups adopt the Internet as a tool in their daily life. The general field of use expands as new services and more user-friendly interfaces evolve.

In regard to the C2C elements of the Internet the magnitude of the impact and the growth of use and number of users will be more and more crucial for a company to know how their products are presented by users online and know how to handle this development. This is also a field of study that needs more research to find out how companies can get involved in the C2C talk without removing the credibility from the statements and meeting resistance from the general users. This brings us to another field of study that needs more work, the rise of referrals and how it can undermine the credibility. An example of this is Amazon.com, which is a shop that gives customers, benefits if they link to them, providing a custom code in the link in order to identify the referrer. This would imply that a person with a blog or a forum would make money on the decisions people make, and would have a financial gain from costumers who chose specific products. Although trained Internet users can spot such behaviour, it may undermine the credibility of eWOM as a whole, if people become even more in doubt of the motivation behind recommending a product or service.

In traditional WOM theory it has been found that the type of risk in a product will have implications for what kind of sources the costumer seeks to find WOM (Wangenheim and Bayón 2004). These are clear source factors regarding social status and expertise that have yet to be explored in relation to risk in eWOM theory.

7.3 Final conclusions

Much research has yet to be done in the field of eWOM and source factors moderating it. It evolves so fast that research on the topic has a continuous need to be updated in order not to run obsolete. Every part of the media is changing rapidly from the user to the user interface to the general service offered online. The main findings in this study can be summed up in four points:

- 1: The information the reader has about the source will determine the credibility assumption.

2: The consumers' knowledge about the product category will moderate the perceived source credibility.

3: Women are more trusting of online consumer information sources than men.

4: Women will be more impacted by the increased information than men with regard to source credibility.

The impact of source credibility on attitude towards product will need future research to be determined.

8.0 Appendix

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Appendix 1: Advertising



TOKIMA[®]

PremierShot DPT-953

HRPS™ **ZEISS** **SD**

- 9.3 megapixel
- 5x optical zoom
- 3" TFT high definition LCD screen
- 700 picture battery capacity*
- HRPS™ picture stabilizer
- Carl Zeiss™ high precision optics
- 512 MB on-board memory

*based on average use

veil. pris 1999,-

Appendix 2: Low information eWOM

PÅ KORT PM RAPPORTER OPP SITAT SVAR

The_Fry i går, 14:15 Post #7



Bruker
 Registrert: 24/03-2003
 Innlegg: 50

QUOTE(Simen1 @ 02/05-2006 : 14:06)

Er det noen som har erfaringer med Tokima DPT-953-kameraet?

Har testet kameraet en stund, og er så langt imponert. Metallhus gjør at det virker solid og godt bygget. Enkle menyer og en kjempefin skjerm som er både stor og klar.

Det er få manuelle innstillinger, men ISO, lukkertid og blenderåpning kan justeres. Synes det er god bildekvalitet, med lite støy og god skarphet. Det er nok både på grunn av Carl Zeiss-linsen og den fiffige bildestabilisatoren. Jeg var for øvrig skeptisk til så mange megapixler til en såpass rimelig pris, men det virker ikke som produsenten kun har tenkt på mpx, helheten er bra.

5 ganger optisk zoom er imponerende i dette segmentet, og gjør at man har stor frihet. Så langt jeg har sjekket er det god batterikapasitet, men jeg vet ikke om det klarer 700 bilder på én lading, slik Tokima lover. Det er praktisk med 512MB interminne, selv om minnekort har blitt veldig billige i det siste.

I det store og det hele synes jeg dette er et meget godt kamera. Den eneste grunnen til at folk vil være skeptiske måtte være at produsenten er veldig lite kjent, jeg hadde hvertfall ikke hørt om Tokima før jeg fikk prøve dette kameraet.

AV KORT PM RAPPORTER OPP SITAT SVAR

voluz i dag, 09:05 Post #8

Appendix 3: High information eWOM

PÅ KORT PM RAPPORTER OPP SITAT SVAR

John B. Nielsen i går, 14:15 Post #7



Profesjonell fotograf
 Medlem av Norges
 Fotografforbund
 Registrert: 24/03-2002
 Innlegg: 2569

QUOTE(Simen1 @ 02/05-2006 : 14:06)

Er det noen som har erfaringer med Tokima DPT-953-kameraet?

Har testet kameraet en stund, og er så langt imponert. Metallhus gjør at det virker solid og godt bygget. Enkle menyer og en kjempefin skjerm som er både stor og klar.

Det er få manuelle innstillinger, men ISO, lukkertid og blenderåpning kan justeres. Synes det er god bildekvalitet, med lite støy og god skarphet. Det er nok både på grunn av Carl Zeiss-linsen og den fiffige bildestabilisatoren. Jeg var for øvrig skeptisk til så mange megapixler til en såpass rimelig pris, men det virker ikke som produsenten kun har tenkt på mpx, helheten er bra.

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I det store og det hele synes jeg dette er et meget godt kamera. Den eneste grunnen til at folk vil være skeptiske måtte være at produsenten er veldig lite kjent, jeg hadde hvertfall ikke hørt om Tokima før jeg fikk prøve dette kameraet.

Nikon D70, Nikkor 18-70 f/3,5-4,5G, Nikkor 50 f/1.8D,
 Nikkor 70-300 f/4-5,6G, Sigma 105 F2.8 EX DG Macro,
 Nikon SB800, Canon Digital Ixus 400

AV KORT PM RAPPORTER OPP SITAT SVAR

voluz i dag, 09:05 Post #8

Appendix 4: Questionnaire (adapted from its online form)**Spørreundersøkelse:**

Handelshøyskolen BI - Studenter

Jan.A.Knudsen@student.bi.no

Spørreundersøkelse om digitalkameraer

Hei!

Du mottar denne e-posten fordi du har samtykket i å delta i vår spørreundersøkelse. Denne undersøkelsen er et ledd i vår master thesis. Undersøkelsen foregår på web, og vil ta 6-7 minutter å besvare. Vennligst klikk på linken under for å delta (hvis du ikke får klikket, kan du kopiere linken og lime inn i nettleseren din).

På forhånd tusen takk for ditt bidrag! Som lovet blir det trukket ut to gavekort fra InterSport blant alle som svarer.

Ha en flott 17. mai!

Mvh

Jan Andreas Knudsen

Lars Kjølen
-----**Question 1**

Alder

Hvor gammel er du?

18-20

21-25

26-30

30+

Question 2

Kjønn

Er du...

Kvinne

Mann

Question 3

Bransje

Hvilken bransje jobber du i? Vennligst velg din hovedaktivitet.

Student

Administrasjon/Kontor/Personal

Bank/Finans/Forsikring

Forskning/Utvikling

Helse/Sosial

Hotell/Restaurant/Storhusholdning

Håndverk/Bygg- og anlegg/Mekanikk

Industri/Produksjon

Ingeniøryrker

Interesseorganisasjoner

IT/Telekommunikasjon/Internett

Jordbruk/Skogbruk/Jakt/Fiske

Konsulenter/Frie yrker

Kunst/Kultur

Luffart

Media/Informasjon/PR

Offentlige tjenester/Forvaltning

Olje/Gass Off-/Onshore/Maritim

Personlige tjeneste- og servicebedrifter

Renhold/Renovasjon

Salg/Markedsføring

Transport/Logistikk/Lager

Reiseliv

Utdanning/Undervisning/Forskning

VVS

Varehandel

Økonomi/Regnskap

Question 4

Informasjonssøk

Hvor ofte bruker du nettet for å finne informasjon?

Daglig

2-3 ganger i uken

Ukentlig

Sjeldnere

Question 5

Produktinformasjon (1-7 Scale)

Vennligst ranger de forskjellige typer kilder etter hva du bruker mest når vil skaffe deg informasjon om forbrukerelektronikk

Aviser (inkludert nettaviser)

Relaterte tidsskrifter/magasiner

Relaterte nettsider med redaksjonelt innhold (à la DinSide.no)

Weblogger

Relaterte brukergrupper/fora på nettet

Venner og kjente

Question 6

Generelt om kameraer (Scale 1-7)

Vennligst angi hvor...

...interessert du er i digitalkameraer

...viktig fotografi er for deg

...god kunnskap du har om digitalkameraer

Question 7

Ditt forhold til reklame (Scale 1-7)

Vennligst angi hvor enig du er i påstandene under.

Reklame gir meg nyttig informasjon i en kjøpsprosess

Reklame er med på å gi meg et riktig inntrykk av et produkt eller en tjeneste

Reklame gjør det enklere å skille mellom gode og dårlige produkter

Bilde 1

Du vil nå se et bilde av et nytt kamera som skal introduseres i Norge.

Du vil senere få spørsmål om kameraet, så vennligst studer bildet før du går videre. (stimuli one is presented)

Question 8

Om kameraet

Kjenner du til dette kameramerket?

Ja

Nei

Usikker

Question 9

Om kameraet 2

Kan du huske å ha sett denne kameramodellen før?

Ja

Nei

Usikker

Bilde 2

Nedenfor vises et eksempel på brukerinformasjon om kameraet. Det

vil senere komme spørsmål om dette bildet, så vennligst studer denne informasjonen. (the generic innfor, low information and high information groups receive stimuli 2)

Question 10

Om kameraet 3 (7 point Lickert scales)

Du har hittil blitt vist en del informasjon om det aktuelle kameraet. Nå er vi interesserte i din mening. Vennligst oppgi din mening om Tokima DPT-953-kameraet.

Dette kameraet har mange megapixler sammenliknet med andre i samme klasse

Dette kameraet virker enkelt å bruke

Dette kameraet har god optikk

Dette kameraet har god batterikapasitet

Størrelsen på dette kameraet passer meg bra

Dette kameraet har gode zoomegenskaper

Question 11 (Only presented for low and high information respondents)

Om avsender (7 point semantic differential scale)

Vennligst forklar ditt inntrykk av avsenderen i Bilde 2 (brukerinformasjonen) på en skala fra 1 til 7, hvor ...

1 = ikke ekspert, 7 = ekspert

1 = ikke erfaren, 7 = erfaren

1 = ikke opplært, 7 = opplært

1 = ikke troverdig, 7 = troverdig

1 = umoralsk, 7 = moralsk

1 = slem, 7 = snill

Question 12

Informasjonskilder

Vennligst se for deg at du skulle kjøpe et digitalkamera i morgen. Hvilke informasjonskilder hadde du brukt for å komme frem til en avgjørelse? Aviser (inkludert nettaviser)

Relaterte tidsskrifter/magasiner

Relaterte nettsider med redaksjonelt innhold (à la DinSide.no)

Weblogger

Relaterte brukergrupper/fora på nettet

Venner og kjente

Takk for hjelpen!

Du har nå fullført spørreskjemaet. Tusen takk for din deltakelse, det har vært til stor hjelp for oss.

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