CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION OF TREND-ANALYSIS:

Whilst considering the importance of Subcultures and Identity

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Table of Contents

Introduction

I hereby aim to present how trend-analysis can be adapted and used at the company PC Allstars, whilst considering the formation and relevance of groups i.e. when these present themselves as subcultures, and the definition of identity.

The presented topic, as well as the research question, is based on a thought process that changed due to the correlation between the theoretical research I did and the work experience at both my placements; especially concerning the tasks I was given at the company PC Allstars.

Before I began my internships I read business economics books (Dormeyer and Kettern, Halt, Kepper, Marchi and Berlado, Thielemann and Ulrich). During the internships however, it became necessary to find more literature on subcultures and the topic of identity (Bauman, Erikson, Marti and May), as well as literature concerning sociological topics (Horx, Kremer und Parsons, Khuon, Licklider, Liebl, Loveridge, Luhmann, Markoff, Müller, Pfandenhauer, Rust, Schirrmacher und Sloterdijk)

Initially, I focused on finding the common denominator between innovation management and design.

In the course of the two placements I found that specific knowledge about subcultures was lacking. This realisation raised the following questions: How do subcultures express themselves on online platforms, and how would one go about identifying these in the forefront?

I then hoped to find the answers to my questions with a questionnaire initiative. The answers I received from the 99 members on the online platform Facebook helped me deduce the following.

I found that the rate of communication happening on online platforms, also amongst those who chose to answer the questionnaire, was extremely high. Some of the answers to the questions also led me to conclude that the groups were motivated to network due to shared aesthetic preferences.

However, understanding of the specific aesthetic standards shared by the respondents could not be gained based on the questions posed in the questionnaire, as was the case when it came to specifying the cultural values the respondents had in common.

I therefore intensified theoretical research in order to find answers to the questions raised in the questionnaire. The initial research question changed, and the focus shifted to finding out which collective identity had developed in the subcultural groups, and the individual identity exhibited by each member.

I discovered that this context was in the forefront of Bauman's findings on the ambiguous nature of identity. He ascertained that people are trapped in (virtual) worlds whilst simultaneously longing for the past and personal encounters, compassionate exchange, social activity and intimacy. An evaluation of the questionnaire answers revealed that friends (personal encounters) and family (the past) are highly valued by the respondents. These results presented the possibility to derive that the longing described by Bauman is also an aspect of the value settings of the group I interviewed. However, more specific information could not be drawn from the evaluated questionnaire.

It became apparent that my tasks and activities during my internship at the company PC Allstars, wouldn't provide the necessary innovative stimulus for me to address the issues raised. This made it necessary to find a methodological approach that would at least enable aesthetic preferences and values-setting of subcultures to be traced; with regards to the group the company perceived to address with their website design. Two specific trend-analysis methods, scanning and monitoring, lent themselves for this purpose due to my design background, and also because scanning the cultural surface is a fundamental trend-analysis technique. Semiotics, the science of signs, is understood to be the main discipline of the scanning process. This fundamental technique together with its main discipline, semiotics, are closely related to methods associated with design.

I was then able to formulate my final research question and carve out structure for the paper (I. 1. -3. - Subculture/Identity, I. 4. - Trend-Analysis and II. 7.-9. - Findings) which ties in with the initial objective, as presented above.

From my point of view, the company PC Allstars would be more successful, when it comes to customer care, if they apply the scanning methods mentioned in Chapter I. 4. (Phase 1 - Phase 3), as well as the monitoring methods, prior to the first consultation. PC Allstars staff i.e. the supervisors, should ensure strict compliance with the standards I presented in order to achieve reliable results whilst implementing these methods. It was also necessary for me to point out that the information flood of today's information age requires trend-analysts of the respective enterprises to display presence of mind and be creative as well as tolerant. It was also important to highlight that good business ethics (as part of an integrative concept) can ensure that any company today (whith raw materials becoming more and more scarce) becomes all the more successful and innovative on a long term basis.

I: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Web 2.0

Today, anyone with a computer, a modem and internet-software can log into the internet, download information, exchange emails with anyone, create a web page and upload information onto the internet, etc.. This way, various ways of networking are made accessible whilst exploring the many possibilities Web 2.0 [1] has to offer.

Networking is a prerequisite for companies to conduct online-marketing. A precise definition of online-marketing cannot be found. What is certain however is that online-marketing is already in play through just the mere representation of a company on the internet (by means of a website); nonetheless online-marketing[2] is certainly in evidence whenever companies specifically advertise their products, and also by advertising them on the internet for purchase. The following figure reflects an almost sevenfold turnover increase for online-marketing i.e. E-commerce between 2003 and 2009.
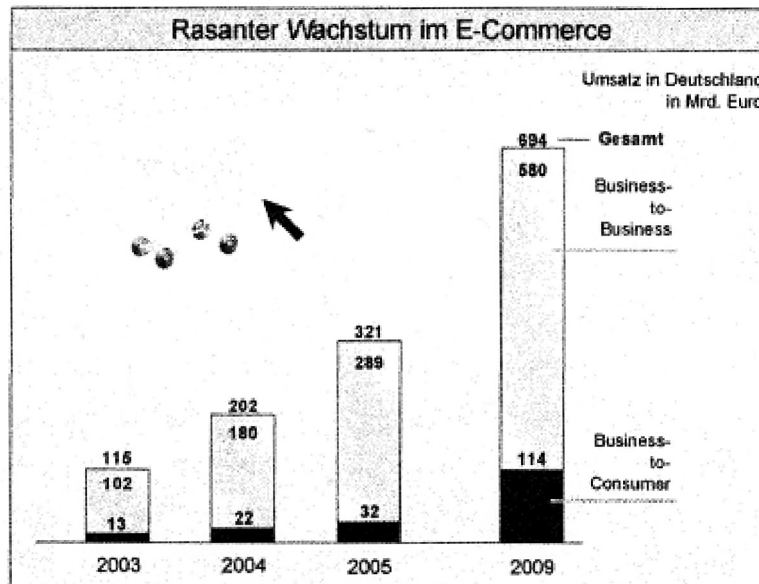
Fig.1 Increase in Turnover in E-Commerce Revenue in Germany in Billions (Euro)

(Halt, 2006, p. 4)

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[1] The pioneer of computer-networking, J.C.R Licklider ('Man-Computer Symbiosis' Mar. 1960, Manchester Institute of Technology website) visualised that a merger between several computers, connected through broadband communication lines would enable communication from one computer to another, as well as store a large amount of information (much like in the books in libraries) that can be accessed at any time - this was Licklider's vision. Licklider's vision was realised only approximately nine years later, in 1969; the necessary computer language was created and computer hardware developed. This was made possible with the financial assistance provided by military facilities in the U.S, which initially allowed Licklider to produce an experimental network (known as ARPANET), which was further mediated by Robert Tyler and the World Wide Web was developed (Markoff, Outlook 2000: 'An Internet Pioneer Ponders the Next Revolution' 20.Dec.1999, New York Times website). After Licklider had conceptualised an inter-connected (between three computer terminals) closed system, Tyler was then able to proceed from one terminal that one can access anywhere there is interactive computing.

[2] Online-marketing, internet-marketing or e-marketing i.e. E-commerce are coherent terms. (Halt, 2006, p.8)

The advancements in information technology, intense global competition and rising customer expectations have had a drastic effect on the transactions that take place on the internet (Marchi and Belardo, 2000, p.77) Thus, technical progress has resulted in internet-marketing occurring within short reaction rates on a very broad scale and at very low costs. This kind of progress has proven that advertising on radio, television, on billboards, in newspapers and in magazines, is more expensive than the cost of an internet Domain.

Furthermore, the costs involved for maintaining social contacts on the internet are much less than what one would invest for a get-together, for example, in a restaurant, theatre or cinema.

2. Social-Websites

In addition to correspondence with friends via email, people can now initiate new friendships and support old friendships. Individuals can 'interactively' establish contact with their friends and acquaintances on 'social-websites' after they have entered into a membership for that specific website. There is also the option of joining a forum, where like-minded people exchange ideas, or otherwise use the additional functionality of blogs to post current events from their personal lives onto the internet, which can then be commented on by other members that have obtained a subscription for the blog.

Social-websites also facilitate the expression of one's own personality by offering members the option of individualise their profile page by either by inserting certain songs, music videos or even home videos. The social-websites that are accessed the most are Facebook, MySpace and Bebo ('Social Networking Websites Review: Don't Let Your Social Life Fade Away' 2010, TopTen Reviews website).[3]

The arrangement of social-websites enables users to find others who are compatible, and allow these individuals to interact. The question that arises is whether social websites provide an adequate platform for subcultures to emerge.

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[3] These social-websites must meet certain criteria to make it entertaining and as attractive as possible for users. A review revealed that Facebook, MySpace and Bebo met met certain criteria:
- Set Profile (offers a personal sphere where thoughts and emotions can be expressed, photographs displayed, and which also provides a platform to display how many friends one has accumulated);
- Security (report and 'block' unwanted users; set profile in private-mode as an option);
- Additional functions (e.g. music; video; features, update personal information at any time)
- Search and find (search by name / school / city / email, which offers a safe search- function)
- Help / Support (possibility to contact the webmaster for example; have access to the FAQ section)
- Access friends only (unwanted users can be rejected)

3. Subcultures in Social-Websites

3.1 What is Culture?

If you ask the layman what 'culture'[4] means the initial response would be to list cultural generalities; such as the theatre, opera, art, eating habits and concerts, to name a few recreational activities. Upon more intensive reflection one must surely come to the conclusion that values and attitudes et al that the majority of people unknowingly internalize, are influenced largely by the culture in which they grew up and live.

This shows that culture is a derivative of and inevitably influenced by the social system one grows up in; meaning that a conceptual separation of social welfare (objective, collective level) and cultural (subjective, collective level) is dismissed (Kroeber and Parsons, 1958, pp.582-593). Although the specifics of both levels can be seen separately there is still the risk of social systems as well as culture existing independently; even though they affect each other mutually. As a result thereof, one could attempt to find out about what develops between individuals in a group, if these individuals share a similar social background.

3.2 How Subcultures Occur

Social groups emerge when individuals communicate with each other intensively on a regular basis. For the emergence of a subculture, the added moment of inter-subjectivity (Luhmann, 2006, p.99) must occur, for example, something common has to be shared. This may be a result of past shared experiences or the future objectives and tasks of a social group.

Where lateral communication and interaction occurs, individuals in the group are responsible for inter-subjectivity; based on sharing common needs, interests and issues of shared value, topics, vocabulary, behavioural codes - consequently a shared construction of reality. As social beings the members of the group seek orientation and bearings in the social structure, through the so-called 'inter-subjectivity' with others. The group will grow, through watching TV, reading, listening, informing themselves and getting excited about things together. (Sloterdijk, 1998, p.44); this is how specific social groups, namely so called 'subcultures' emerge.

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[4] The Latin word 'cultura' was originally only used in an agricultural context; the 'maintenance and cultivation of land'. The Romans applied the term 'culture' in the broader sense of added refinement of human life; 'human care'. In the Age of Enlightenment (18th century) a new meaning was added, whereby the term was used to distinguish between man and animal. This resulted in a pluralistic understanding of culture: 'culture' is defined as an advanced form of societies, communities, people and nations. (Dormayer and Kettern, 1987, p.49) To date, the term 'culture' has not only been enriched by everyday use but also by other scientific disciplines, thus adding a variety of meanings; a binding definition of the concept of culture is therefore not possible.

3.3 Genesis of Personal Identity

A subculture manifests through a shared construction of reality brought about by the processes described above, such as shared thought, communication and interaction. Therewith, the subculture also gains its autonomy and identity. The common thread which is a common sense of aesthesia, simplifies the group's coordination and establishes orientation for each individual group member in the form of social support; they feel safe and have social contacts.

However, does this imply that a subculture develops an own identity at the expense of the personal identity or free will of each group member?
If so, whereby is the identity of each group member distinguished?

3.3.1 Adulthood

The search for identity[5] as an adult is illustrated as follows: To begin with Foucault argues that, „Our churches tell us: we are a child of God. Our politicians tell us: you are an American (or an Australian, or an Indian, or...). Our television tells us; you are a consumer. We are told who we are, and as a result we rarely ask." (May, 2006, pp.2-3). Foucault states that the first step involves finding out 'who we are' and thereby questioning those circumstances which we think we are certain about.

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[5] A child develops his 'self-concept' through the lives of his closest caregivers. In the organisation of simplified tribal societies the development of a child's identity is based on a foundation made available through a direct relationship to the source and to the means of production. The tools of these societies, that facilitate this process, are related to the continuations of the human body (development and surroundings). Their children partake in the 'technical' and 'magical' happenings of the body and the environment. Childhood and culture may be full of dangers for them, but it remains a 'closed world': The amount of role models is minimal and remains unchanging initially (Erikson, 1973, p.16).

Machines are no longer the continuation of the human body for life in the industrialised world. Instead, entire groups of people are made into machine operators, and children no longer gain the experience of witnessing their parents manning the machines. Stratification or grouping, as well as the specialisation of labour, force the child to represent its 'self-concept' in alternating and even contradictory prototypes that represent sections of the world around them (people become operators of the machines). From the child's perception of his individual manner of processing experiences, largely due to successful variants which are mediated by his/her parents or closest caregivers, conveys an invigorating feeling of reality and setting for the growing child (Erikson, 1973, p.17). In this regard, the child is in sync with the layout, time schedule and life plan of its parents, caregivers and the group as a whole. Erikson calls this kind of self-confidence that the child has gained, the 'ego-identity' (1973, p.17). Erikson goes on to clarify that this is a subjective experience, a dynamic fact and psychological phenomenon that occurs in groups. According to Erikson, the conscious feeling of having a personal identity is based on two simultaneous observations:
- „The immediate perception of one's egality and continuity in time and;
- The related observation that others also recognize this egality and continuity.(Erikson, 1973, p.18)
  Erikson states that the 'ego-identity' can be seen from two perspectives:
- The subjective aspect of perceiving one's own egality and continuity; as it were is an identity established at the core of the individual.
- How others perceive us.
- Thus, the concept of 'identity' expresses a reciprocal relationship: That which has been establish at the core of an individual to be perceived by others (outside world).

Sartre on the other hand, believes that we can always decide who we are for ourselves and therefore see ourselves as 'free'. Sartre rejects any extrinsic determination of who we are; we are simply what we choose to be. (May, 2006, p.8) Based on Foucault's approach, the kind of 'freedom' referred to by Sartre demands a differentiated approach:

* By 'freedom', he means for us to question and challenge the ,
  'exertion of power' and the 'exertion of sovereignty' imposed on us.
* Furthermore, refuse the behavioural patterns forced upon us, or those that have become habitual (Marti, 1999, p. 162).

This makes us view Foucault not as an nihilist - as suggested by some- but rather as a sceptic, whose criticism incites a permanent civil disobedience.

That being said, one can conclude that Foucault's philosophy of freedom does not focus on discovering what people are. To a greater degree, his philosophy is directed towards encouraging people to refuse an attributive identity.

He doesn't deal directly with the concept of identity i.e. in an attempt to define it. He sees identity, to begin with, as 'a process' by which individuals refuse that which is 'imposed' or 'habituated'.

3.3.2 Search for Identity in Adulthood Today

Foucault's study of identity is based on an understanding of strata or class in the industrial era. Bauman, however, views this as outdated because of the transition from the industrial era to the technological era. Based on the social changes that resulted from this transition, social, cultural and sexual identity has become uncertain and transient; which brings us to Bauman's reflections on the identity's ambiguous nature. For Bauman, the most prominent feature of 'modern times' is globalization, which he perceives as a radical change, a great transformation that affects state structures for example, working conditions, intergovernmental relations and collective subjectivity (Bauman, 2004). Therefore, globalisation should be seen as a process, as should the development of identity; which has to assert itself in the crisis of the given social situation. Bauman concurs with Foucault's stipulation, with which Foucault intended to encourage the individual to reject attributive identities. However, Bauman's statements differ from Foucault's, as these deal with anarchic subjectivity, and for Bauman the state of anarchy has already been achieved through changes in social structures, as mentioned above, which also result in the loss of traditional values and moral decline. Bauman elaborates on identity's ambiguous nature, seeing it as:

* A concomitant nostalgia for the past (the lost identity) whilst living in the global world. (Bauman, 2004, p.7)
* Bauman (2004, pp.11-12) does not see identity as resulting from this ambivalence, but rather as set in stone, or secured by a lifelong guarantee. He views identity as eminently negotiable and revocable. As long as people believe their fate is to achieve a sense of belonging, they will find no access to their own

identity. Identity is something that they must invent for themselves. Bauman's description of identity converges with Foucault's approach, who views identity as a cognitive process and not a stationary state of existence.

* Bauman (2004, pp.38, 39, 54) also points out that the access to identity of choice has been barred for certain groups of people through the emergent global hierarchy. These groups have no say in deciding their preferences and are burdened by identities forced on them by others; which they resent. Bauman concludes, as Foucault did in his script entitled 'Ethics of the Intellectuals' (Marti, 1999, p.145), which states that according to a common perception, intellectuals are in possession of politically valuable truths. The intellectual knows about the hidden logic hidden in our history. His mission is to have this knowledge communicated to others and in so doing help those who lack understanding; whom he refers to as being underprivileged, to speak up for themselves and express themselves as the individuals they are. The subculture gains its autonomy because of those individuals that are burdened by identities they had forced on them.

3.4 Subcultures and Identity

No affirmation can be given to the question that was raised earlier concerning those who have integrated themselves into a subculture such as Facebook, and as to whether they have in fact undergone an integration process at the expense of their own identity and loss of their free will. Those who have grouped because of common needs, shared interests, consumer preferences, topics, vocabulary or codes; to watch TV together, read together, listen together, to learn together and get excited about something together, have initially found their orientation in their social arrangement. This is due to the fact that they were disoriented before they began the search. At no point in time have they undergone the process of questioning, or found themselves. They have now come to belong to this subculture, just as those who perceive their destiny is to 'belong'. Nonetheless, they have not given up an imposed or attributed identity in order to invent a new identity within the given subculture. They have failed to understand the search for identity as an effort for which one struggles, and through more struggle, fights to protect. (Bauman, 2004, p.12)

Those who have come together in their chosen subcultures, as mentioned above, primarily only sought a means of orientation and social fabric, as a result of social change. Bauman inevitably argues that social change brought with it a decline in values and morals, thus leaving the individuals disoriented. Subsequently, they managed to find both. In 2007, an estimated 61% of all teenagers in the UK, aged 13-17 years, had created a personal profile on a networking website as a means of socialising online (Bauman, 2009, p.8). The schoolboys and schoolgirls put their positive qualities on show on their networking website in the hope of attracting attention, and

gaining recognition and acceptance in order to remain in contention socially. In this way teenagers are seduced, pressured and forced to market attractive and desirable products themselves, in order to increase their market value.[6] They are the merchandise they place on the market, advertise for and sell, which subsequently makes them marketer of the merchandise, and into the merchandise they sell.

Therefore, one would not characterise teenagers' relationships on networking-websites as benevolent and defined by social activity. Intimacy experienced publicly, which is simultaneously a way of avoiding personal encounters. Based on this kind of interaction, young people have been subjugated to the dehumanised laws of the ‚consumer society' and not acquired a personal identity, which would have protected them in 'subculture', networking-sites like Facebook et al. Nevertheless, teenagers long for personal encounters, benevolent interaction, social activity and intimacy outside of their networking-world, irrespective of the increasing fear of physical contact. On the other hand, the longing they display and the imprisonment in a virtual world reflects what Bauman addressed with regards to identity's ambiguous nature, which according to Bauman, makes the attributed identity of each individual negotiable, revocable and facilitates the inventing of oneself.

Trend-analysis can be used to detect an individual's ambiguous nature within their subculture groups, or aesthetic preferences that serve as incentives and the group value settings, as well as distinguish and identify symbolic signs required for the construction of an identity.

4. Trend-Analysis and Subculturalism

4.1 The Concept of Trend-Analysis

A fixed definition of trend-analysis[7] is not given. The term is however explained as being a „fundamental focus on a (statistically detectable) development; (economic) development trend (Duden, 1974, p.740). This definition indicates that the term is derived from a quantitative concept. The sociological perspective also provides a

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[6] The consequence thereof is that the existential environment of young people, which Bauman calls the 'consumer society' is characterized by the fact that all human relationships are structured along the pattern of relationships between consumers and consumer objects. People can be subjective, but not without first turning into merchandise. At the same time no one can be sure to remain subjective without having to generate the skills to revive and refresh that which is expected for merchandise made commercially available. Bauman (2009, p.24) compares the subjectivity in the society of consumers as a fetish, just like merchandise in a company run by producers. The humane origin of entirely human merchandise, charged with superhuman authority, is forgotten; as well as the sequence of human actions which led to its formation. Whereby, buying and selling of symbolic signs ('lining-values'), used for constructing an identity, becomes the subjectivity in the society of consumers.

[7] Trend-analysis can be traced back to an article written by political scientist Ossip K. Flechtheim, entitled 'Teaching the Future' (Mller, 'Denken mit der Uhr im Nacken' 16.Mar.2005, ORF ON Science website), who theorises that the future can not only be shaped, but by predicting it, be amenable to influence. Therefore, it would be imperative to develop scientific methods in order to design ‚desirable futures'.

qualitative description of the trend-phenomenon (Liebl, 2002, p.59); (Horx and Wippermann, 1996, p.13).

According to Horx, the term 'trend' can be applied to and seen in the context of fashion, and then assigned to the changes in society's values. (Horx and Wippermann, 1996, p.13)

This view is based on findings that portray social order as being in a state of instability since the beginning of the 1990s, which watered down political classifications of the left and right wing; thereby establishing an 'alternative culture' (Horx and Wippermann, 1996, p.13). As demonstrated in Bauman's perspective of globalisation presenting a great transformation; a radical change to state structures (working conditions etc.) (Bauman, 2004, p.6). Several new conflicts have arisen such as ethnicity, man and nature were yielded in the industrialised society and both the prevalent poles of this society, namely 'work' and 'capital'. Today, these already acquired 'conflicts' are manifesting with new quality. Liebl (2002, p.10) therefore concludes from this that strong topics determine peoples' orientation, and that the alignment with certain 'issues' is a response to the increasing complexity.[8]

The omission of known orientation patterns results however in a tendency towards individualization, mainly because frames of reference such as family and church, et al lose their function as mediator between man and society. This results in, as noted above, affiliations being macerate, and classes and strata being blurred. It therefore becomes more difficult to engage in Foucault's fight for freedom and identity, because the attributed behavioural patterns and exhortations of power are blurred and made less tangible.

Nonetheless, trends can be seen as indicators of permanent social change and not only understood as just being a flux of what is currently 'in fashion'. To summarise, the following can now be said of the definition of the term trend:

* Trend-analysis is not only processed **quantitatively**;
* Trend-analysis is not only about its affiliation to **fashion**
* Trend-analysis yields evidence of social developments;
* Trend-analysis references socio-economic and structural processes unamenable to influence.

This approach was significant for Robert Jungk, who already in 1965 founded the „Institute for Future Research" in Vienna (Mller, 'Denken mit der Uhr im Nacken' 16.Mar.2005, ORF ON Science website).

Amongst the trend-analysts, representatives from agencies and institutions offer consulting services to predict future developments. The services offered by such agencies, so-called 'think tanks', extends to providing seasonal or daily trend reports, producing trend-publications, conducting trend studies, and administering marketing services such as brand-positioning and innovation- or product-development. The term trend-analyst implies an academic background; trend-analysis however, has no scientific basis. (Rust, 1995, p.103)

[8] As issues change, orientation opportunities and possibilities become manifold and also present short-term solutions.

4.2 Distinction between Trend-Analysis and Other Related Scientific Disciplines

Trend-analysis is similar to futurology; with futurology[9] which is endemic in political advisory work or policy-planning (Pfadenhauer, 'Wie forschen Trendforscher?' May.2004, Forum qualitative Sozialforschung website). In contrast, however, trend-analysis places emphasis on ascertaining social change, which can be transferred and used in economic processes. It therefore has no prognostic aspirations; these are reduced to solely providing a diagnosis of the present.

The process is very similar to 'market-forecasting'[10] in the business management sector. Trend-analysis can present additional information for diagnosing market-positioning, and developing market-forecasts, which is directed towards qualitative (not quantitative) market-research. (Kepper, 1996, p.144) Since consumers are not always consciously decisive about their needs, trend-analysis can serve to amplify certain interests, unheeded by market-researchers. (Khuon, 'Die Trendforschung als Berufsfeld für Volkskundler' 2002, Hamburg Universität website)

4.3 Trend-Analysis and Subcultures

As demonstrated above in Chapter I. 3. a., more and more cliques are formed, known as 'lifestyle-mixtures', that form separately from economic activity within the middle class- society, because of an increase in individualisation. Target groups then form life-'style' groups. In 'What is Trend-Research', Horx defines these clusters as "sensual sub-systems" (Horx and Wippermann, 1996, p.17) The increasing individualization and 'liquidification' of society and the resulting 'loss of control', leads individuals to search for sturdy concepts and references. However trends play a key role when it comes to registering and reflecting current, complex, dynamic and social phenomena[11], and also his indicates that trend-analysis has a hidden potential to identify and name the 'unknown'; such as the orientation and formation of subcultures.

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[9] Foresight-research is a recognised partial science, that established itself after the second World War in Anglo-Saxon countries. It was implemented for the early prediction of potential conflict and technological developments, in order to prevent catastrophes like the second World War. (Loveridge. 1998, p.7)

[10] This is one of the five phases of sales-planning in a business, namely: market diagnosis, market forecast, goal-setting, action-planning and budget-planning.

[11] This also coincides with Habermas' statement in is theory on communicative trade. Social scientists encounter symbolic, pre-structured objects; these represent structures of preliminary theoretical knowledge, which help bring forth subjects that can speak and take action in the social context of life, either directly or indirectly. Social sciences' object region encompasses everything that falls under 'component of a lifeworld'. The meaning of this expression can be explained intuitively through references to its symbolic objects, that we produce through speech and our activities: starting from instantaneous utterances (speech act, purposive activity, cooperatives), beyond the sediment of theses utterances (such as texts, traditions, artworks, material objects of culture, commodities, techniques), to constructions produced indirectly (institutes, social systems, personality structures). (Horx and Wippermann, 1996, pp.29-30)

4.4 Trend-Analysis Methods

Trend-analysis is challenged by the increasing amount of information available from the daily stream of texts, patterns et al., which has to be filtered so that it can be grouped into meaningful units and allocated accurate terms. Various methods are applied for this process, the most important being:

* Scanning
* Monitoring
* Desk-Research Scenario-Prognosis[12] (Horx and Wippermann, 1996, p.94)

4.4.1 Scanning

Scanning of 'cultural surfaces' (Rust, 1995, p101) is the fundamental application of trend-analysis. It consists of analysing print media (newspapers, weekly newspapers, magazines, news magazines, lifestyle magazines etc.), but also of products, films, packaging, electronic media, internet, television, museums, theatre, whereby texts are transported in the foreground.

Trend-analysts retract semiotic patterns, phrases, themes, etc. from these texts. The media are then understood to be a reflection of society, containing interpretations of society and thereby reflecting cultural changes. This can be seen as the first phase of the scanning process. It is important to consider how the information is presented and the angle from which it is depicted; however, validity is not the key priority.

Semiotics, which is the doctrine of the 'signs', can therefore be seen as providing the basis for the scanning process. (Horx and Wippermann, 1996, p.79) These 'signs' (used by trend-analysts) carry a certain meaning that can only be interpreted by a trained trend-analyst. Of course, the same signs carry several meanings, depending on the time, place or context in which they have been detected.

The respective market leaders of the various media represent the character of a professional or a social group most fittingly, which means that no special consideration has to be made for the less successful or prominent media; an exception is made for the so-called 'niche-products' (publications of marginalized groups) and avant-garde leaflets, that are known to quickly address emerging issues.

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[12] **Desk-Research**

This approach is based on 'meta-analysis', whereby in-depth interviews and group discussions are conducted to gain a broader understanding of mostly unconscious attitudes, and the motives behind people's actions. Similarly, semantic-analysis exposes associations evoked by established terms. (Horx and Wippermann, 1996, p.90) The results of these techniques can be used to forecast possible futures, whereby professionals from different areas form a panel of experts ('think-tanks'), that analyse the data collected on specific issues.

Scenario-Prognosis

If professionals do not have the opportunity to collaborate directly, and these specific questions are just handed over to be edited, referred to as the 'Delphi-Method'. Summaries are formulated for each report which are then submitted to the experts for processing. It was not until a further revision that a definitive opinion is established from the experts who were consulted.

The fortitude of the process of scanning lies in the perception of aesthetic abnormalities, fractures and changes in society. Based on this semiotic approach, changes in the visual language, would be grouped, specified, and communicated as 'trends'. Such as those indicated by cosmetic changes, whether in the staging of people or products depicted, the representation of a given situation, the design of packaging or of the product itself, should be recorded in order to categorise these images and classify them into life-'style' groups. (Horx and Wippermann, 1996, p.15) Thereby, these life-'style' groups can be secured by statistics and sociological observations in the second phase of the scanning process. (Horx and Wppermann, 1996, p.52) The third phase of the scanning process would involve checking niche-concepts in the service sector, or with regards to products, utilising the discovered trend on a small scale. (Horx and Wippermann, 1996, p. 53)

4.4.2 Monitoring

Monitoring can be understood as a scanning-process that takes places in a restricted area (Rust, 1995, p.102). This sub-area reflects an image of a peer group, cultural avant-garde or subculture in motion. The method of monitoring is recognised as. field-research and as part of the methodology of trend-analysis. It is a very costly approach and must therefore first be clarified with the potential client.

The term field-research is borrowed from journalism and means that a "break from the familiar or norm" in certain scenarios and avant-garde movements (as explained above in the presentation niche-products and in print media or avant-garde leaflets) can be detected. Certain social groups are thus found to be closer to the origin of trends than others (Khuon, 28.02.2005, University of Hamburg website). This is where the special abilities of a trend-analysts are sought.

4.5 Exigencies Directed at Trend-Analysts

Considering that trend-analysts is to gain a perception of aesthetic abnormalities, fractures and changes, as well as interpret 'signs' and are experienced in selecting the appropriate sub-groups for observation, as well as grouped signs into life-'style' groups in life, it is clear that trend-analysts should meet specific requirements.

4.5.1 Inadequate Scientificity

Trend-analysis is criticized for not being scientifically attested, based on the fact that the work process is insufficiently systematized and presented. Trends are disclosed inductively and intuitively. Apart from the possible errors that can arise from an inductive approach, other issues have to be considered: After trends have been disclosed and named, the search begins for evidence that would indicate this trend in a second step. (Horx and Wippermann, 1996, p. 52) At this stage, there is already the danger that, instead of an inductive course of action, a procedure based on hypotheses could develop, especially if the existing material is not controlled critically

and sufficiently. Tributaries, such as sub-groups, are selected for observation as determinants for future social trends in a third step (Horx and Wippermann, 1996, p. 53). However, the question still arises with regards to the standards applied when selecting individual sub-groups. It is therefore necessary that each trend-analyst initially reviews and notes the standards which led him to their hypothetically derived decisions, in view of the information flood that analysts are presented with in today's society; which makes the task all the more challenging.

4.5.2   Multitasking

The information flood of today's information age, which is relayed via computers and mobile phones (to name a few) cannot be fully absorbed by the individual, not even when the attention an individual once dedicated to themselves is exhausted by the information fed back to them, eaten up and left behind like an empty shell. Schirrmacher (2009, p. 18) quoted the philosopher Daniel Denett as being right in saying: "There are no longer enough brains to accommodate the population boom of ideas."

As described, information consumes one's attention span; this is its food. However, seeing as the capacity required to process new information streaming in is not available, a distribution battle takes place.

This 'distribution battle' is reminiscent of Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution. If according to Darwin's theory population boom and food shortage meet, then some species cease to exist, whereas others survive. The conclusion suggests itself: Darwinism in this form is an advantage for the first one to get the crucial information (the first being the one with enough attention to process this information). The participant faces this case of Darwinism in these mechanisms.

The consequence of the the individual dealing with unprocessed information flooding in, is the necessity to enhance one's mental skills, memory and attention span. The danger behind individuals being consumed with the fear of missing something and the coercion to consume each bit of information made available, then becomes reality. The consequence of this may be the incapacity to think autonomously.

It is therefore of significant importance to present possible benefits one can derive from the information explosion, in this research paper. In order to do this one has to find focal points and permit oneself to be 'less perfect' in order to strengthen that which we and the digital world cannot provide, for example creativity, presence of mind and tolerance. (Schirrmacher, 2009, p.21)[13] Nonetheless, we still possess the ability to select what is needed, before the information flood made this more into a challenge.

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[13] Schirrmacher observes that the most important philosophies of the last two centuries can be found in the digital age, in a 'personalized form'; not as ideology, but as something we practice in life - Taylorism in the shape of multitasking, Marxism in the shape of free information, Darwinism in the shape of the advantage of the first one, who gets crucial information.

4.5.3 Multitasking/Company and Integrative Concept

Similarly, companies need to become accustomed to handling the information flood accordingly. Innovation management for companies, according to Glen Marchi and Salvatore Belardo (2000) (Berndt (ed.), 2000, p.73) means being competitively viable so that superior knowledge can be managed and applied in order to steadily bring innovation to the market. This hypothesis is based on the rate at which change occurs in technological progress, intense global competition and raised expectations of customers. These three factors thus significantly influence the way business is conducted. Jack Welch of General Electric (Marchi and Belardo, 2000) concluded that the rate at which change is occurring is a predetermining factor towards the company reacting faster to these changes in order to survive the rat race. Companies are forced to react to changes faster and cut the products' life cycle if they want to remain in competition; only then are they able to grow and survive.

The realisation that companies can only prosper and survive if they shorten the production cycles, addresses the company's ethical concept. Company ethics, or general economic ethics, are a methodological effort to work through and critically highlight normative concepts and thought patterns, that underlie certain procedures, vindicatory patterns or even good managerial initiatives. [There are three accredited company ethical concepts:]

  * economistic concept
  * separative concept[14]
  * integrative concept. (Thielmann and Ulrich, 2009, p.29)

The integrative concept emphasises that in order for management to become accountable, it would imply the will to conduct business responsibly and the pursuit of business goals legitimately. Management that does this acts in accordance to 'ethics with morals' i.e. with an integral company ethic (Thielmann and Ulrich, 2009, p.39).

The supreme goal is therefore to achieve business integrity, which is understood to be the ethical backbone for legitimate and accountable pecuniary reward. This way company ethics comes before economic success, and also before pushing to shorten

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[14] In reference to company ethics, the economistic concept complies to 'ethics without morals'. In accordance with this, management operates most 'ethically', when strictly profit orientated. That way management dismisses personal morality i.e. integrity, and everything is considered from a cost/profit calculation viewpoint. (Thielmann and Ulrich, 2009, p.30)

The separative concept suggests, that ethical considerations have nothing to do with core business profit realisations; the processes involved are ethically neutral. Carriage return (CR) is often an add-on, leaving core business models and operations largely untouched (Thielmann and Ulrich, 2009, p.35)

Therefore, ethical obligation is either an additive, which manifests through a contributive concept, whereby ethical requirements are served adequately. In this case, the company has contributed to society, which is in accordance to a company's business management and its orientation on realising profits. Or it is otherwise acknowledged, that ethical requirements also have to correspond with core business profit realisations. This is however attested as impossible to consider, in relation to the company's intended preconditions, and complex ethical issues are delegated to others, individuals or politics. (Thielmann and Ulrich, 2009, p.35)

product-life cycles to achieve (predominant) economic success. Company principles that revolve around shortening product-life cycles will in any case be unsuccessful on a long term basis, seeing as raw materials are becoming more scarce. The principle of company ethics therefore implies a critical distancing from a company's own interests, and a willingness to relinquish an absolute fulfilment of these interests i.e. absolute profit maximisation.

Hence, it becomes apparent in the context of company-innovation management that there is a fear of missed opportunities, due to this pressure, created by the necessity to consume all information that is available in order to remain in the competition. Nonetheless, companies are not in a position to absorb and process the information flooding in and will fail in their attempt to do so. Algorithmic thought processes and programs are inferior to those of 'free' individuals characterised by spontaneous creativity, presence of mind and innovative potential. Companies will therefore need to be less particular when processing information and they have to take their time in order to implement change. They would benefit considerably from considering peoples' primal competencies. In this case tolerance refers to the ability to consider ethical company principles, but not only those concerning the prioritisation of profit maximisation as in shortening the product life cycle.

4.5.4   Standards for Trend-Analysts

This means that trend-analysts should not feel compelled to reveal and validate their standards applied to hypotheses - that would otherwise serve as proof of a trend; or when selecting a sub-group, during the monitoring process. This also means that, the trend-analyst is required to consider or register presence of mind, creativity and tolerance. The trend-analyst is presented with a unique opportunity. However, because of today's information flood, the trend-analyst is forced to be present in mind, creative and tolerant when evaluating information during the scanning process; albeit in a verifiable procedure.

Such standards could include the following:
* tolerance (fairness)
* sustainability (usefulness), and because of the laws of thought
* clear inquiries
* verifiable hypotheses
* plausible selection of methods
* traceable / checkable evaluation
* labelling of interpretations and speculations.

5. Synopsis of Theoretical Research

It has been established, that culture is influenced by social systems, and that these aspects affect each other. Subcultures then occur when individuals communicate regularly and intensively with each other and have something in common, based on shared past experiences or future goals, thus creating a shared construction of reality, aesthesia (sensibility) and 'group' identity.

Ultimately, the search for identity in adulthood is a process of ridding oneself of that which is imposed or habituated, as viewed by Foucault, in order to find orientation and one's own identity (Marti, 1999, p. 162). In modern times, where identity has become uncertain and transient because of social change, identity must therefore be comprehended on the basis of its ambivalent nature. For example, one the one hand in view of a concomitant nostalgia for the past, and on conversely the present circumstance. Consequently identity is not set in stone, but negotiable and revocable, so that each individual can invent and reinvent themselves (Bauman 2004).

Furthermore, it has been established that individuals that have grouped to form subcultures in networking-websites, have arranged their interpersonal relationships in patterns that resemble the relationship between consumer and consumer objects. Simultaneously, these individuals still long for personal encounters, compassionate exchange and intimacy beyond the virtual world. This demonstrates an ambiguity which makes the allocated identity negotiable and revocable for them.

Considering the different theoretical perspectives, it has been demonstrated that the trend-phenomenon is both qualitative and quantitative. The quantitative being derived from statistically ascertainable developments and tendencies in economic development; and thereby converging with business economics concepts, which has advanced to the point of including qualitative prognoses as an inherent feature of market-research.

The qualitative aspect of trend-phenomenon has its focus in the ascertainment of social change, which is transferred into economic processes, thereby resembling the qualitative nature of futurology; a process endemic to political planning.

With regards to social change, trend-analysis largely considers the unhinging, maceration and liquefaction of social order dating back to the 1990s, and the maceration of left and right-winged political orientation (Horx and Wippermann, 1996, p. 13); similarly, Bauman (2004) addressed globalisation as a great transformation, which he also presented as a radical change.

As a result of known orientation patterns falling away, a tendency towards individualisation has become apparent, resulting in more and more isolated clusters or cliques being formed; so called lifestyle-mixtures. Target groups become life-'style'

groups. Trends therefore occupy a key position when it comes to grasping current, complex, dynamic and social phenomena. Therein lies the potential of trend-analysis, namely in defining the unknown.

Each of the methods used in trend-analysis, such as scanning and monitoring have been introduced; whereby scanning cultural surfaces is acknowledged as a fundamental technique of trend-analysis, and the trend-analyst is able to attain and process semiotic patterns, the use of phrases, topics, and the like (Phase 1). The results are then classified in lifestyle groupings. Thereafter, these results are secured with statistical material and sociological findings (Phase 2). In the third phase of the scanning process, niche-concepts are examined to see if these then correlate with the trends that have been discovered.

These monitoring methods can also be seen as a scanning process that is however only implemented in a constrained sub-area, like for example, cultural avant-garde and subculture.

Trend-analysis has also been perceived as lacking scientific credibility because trend-analysts disclose trends inductively and intuitively. This becomes a liability when searching for evidence of supposed trends, which leads to using procedures that are based on hypotheses. A similar danger arises when selecting individual sub-groups for observation. The standards listed above need to be considered, so that an approach steered by inscrutable hypotheses can be avoided.

Furthermore, I also expounded on how multitasking in today's day and age adds an additional challenge, which impacts a trend-analysts work (as well as the corresponding company employees). The trend-analyst has to therefore set focal points and be less perfectionistic in order to bolster creativity, presence of mind and tolerance. Lastly, I also demonstrated how tolerance-reinforcement for company employees also entails heeding the company's ethical principles, in the sense of integrative concepts, and not just principles that place profit maximisation in the foreground.

II: RESEARCH FINDINGS

6. Questionnaire

Many of the initial concepts for the hypothesis were inspired by a lecture held by Mr. Kevin Tallon entitled, 'Trends Plus', as well as a lecture held by an Proctor & Gamble employee and a discussions led by Dr Jamie Brassett in his classes. Kevin Tallon presented his book to in which trends are explained with picture aids. The Proctor & Gamble employee used graphics to present how the company works with networks. These then led me ponder on possible common denominators between innovation management and design.

The first placement at the firm 'Faces of Design' that is in itself a social-website (and platform) for designers, helped me considerably in my approach to this question. It was during my internship that I began considering a questionnaire for a survey.

I first came to learn about trend-analysis at my second placement at 'PC Allstars'[15]; after I had familiarised myself with literature by trend-researchers such as Horx, Wippermann and Rust (prior to this, I had only been familiar with literature on innovation management from a business management point of view). I was also confronted with the topic of subcultures at PC Allstars. This resulted from conducting research on the internet for their client Global Westfra Ltd. with regards to their website design. The main question that arose was: How do subcultures manifest through online-platforms, and how would one go about identifying them? At this point, I was also occupied with the term 'identity' and decided to find out more about how I would go about conducting a survey for my dissertation.

6.1 Initial Objective

At the time of compiling the questionnaire I had was based on the assumption that subcultures occur when individuals communicate intensively on a regular basis and shared similar goals. On that basis, I then attempted to formulate a questionnaire that would assist me in identifying the similarities and disparities of groups, or otherwise patterns with regards to subcultures. I approached this intuitively. Thus, subconsciously drew on design methodology in the process and distributed an image (Fig.2) to animate those I wished to reach and get them to partake in the survey. The questions were focused on the topics presented in my hypothesis: How are subcultures presented in online-platforms and how can they be identified?

Fig. 2 'Subculture and Social-Web' Survey Image

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[15] See Work-Experience Protocol: PC Allstars in Appendix, p....

I sent a request out to 383 of my friends via the internet-platform Facebook and received 100 completed survey questionnaires; whereby only 99 of the questionnaires could be evaluated i.e. complete. Below I have included a series of graph, which reflect the answers to questions 1, 4, 5 and 6 (Fig. 3, 4, 5, 6).

1. Normal 0 0 1 7 45 1 1 55 11.773 0 0 0 How would you describe your personal choice of clothing?		Response Percent	Response Total
Casual		54%	54
Smart		23%	23
Sporty		12%	12
Alternative		12%	12
Retro		9%	9
Comfortable		16%	16
Other:		5%	5

Fig. 3 Response to Question 1 of the Survey

4. Normal 0 0 1 6 35 1 1 42 11.773 0 0 0 Of the types of music listed below, which are the three that you prefer?		Response Percent	Response Total
RnB		20%	20
Soul/Hip Hop		39%	39
Funk		29%	29
Reggae		20%	20
Dancehall		9%	9
Indie		35%	35
Punk		7%	7
Rock		31%	31
Metal		5%	5
Singer and Song writer		37%	37
Minimal		25%	25
House/Techno		34%	34
Drum and Base		12%	12
Jazz		27%	27
Latin		12%	12
Other:		11%	11

Fig. 4 Response to Question 4 of the Survey

5. Please select the two movies that you consider to be the most iconic.		Response Percent	Response Total
Scarface		19.2%	19
Pulp fiction		57.6%	57
Mickey Mouse Cartoons		13.1%	13
Fear and loathing in las vegas		19.2%	19
Star Wars		17.2%	17
Alien		5.1%	5
High School Musical		0%	0
Twilight		2%	2
Titanic		5.1%	5
Breakfast at Tiffanies		28.3%	28
Half Baked		5.1%	5
Cheech and Chong		0%	0
Matrix		15.2%	15
La Haine		12.1%	12
Other:		6.1%	6

Fig. 5   Response to Question 5 of the Survey

6. Please select the two media figures that you consider to be the most iconic.		Response Percent	Response Total
Charlie Chaplin		38%	38
Betty Boop		10%	10
Al Pacino		28%	28
Pamela Anderson		3%	3
Kurt Cobain		23%	23
James Dean		31%	31
Mickey Mouse		24%	24
Will Smith		9%	9
Marlin Monrow		22%	22
Other:		10%	10

Fig. 6   Response to Question 6 of the Survey

To the first question, regarding clothing preferences, 54% answered with 'Casual'. In response to question 4, which referred to music preferences, 39% selected 'Soul/ Hip Hop'. Question 5 produced a more uniform response, with 58% selecting 'Pulp Fiction' as their favourite film. And the response to question 6 showed that 38% considered 'Charlie Chaplin' to be the most iconic media-figure. These results reveal

many similarities. The majority of the respondents share a similar taste in film and iconic film star and describe their clothing preferences as casual. Also, most prefer to listen to soul music or Hip Hop.

Ultimately, the answer to question 7 confirmed that 72% use Facebook as their online-platform of choice. According to question 8 (Fig. 7), 82% have been using Facebook for over 12 months. Question 9 (Fig. 8)revealed that 38% use it more than 15 times in a week, and the answer to question 10 (Fig. 9)showed that 41% of these respondents use Facebook for the duration of 11 to 30 minutes each visit. Whereby, in response to question 11, the average number of ,friends' for each respondent lies at 281 (an average derived from a sum of 26 997 friends; totalled from the 96 respondents that use Facebook). The results to the questions 8, 9, 10 show a that the respondents communicate intensively i.e. a long and regular use of the the social platform.

Below are graphs depicting the results to question 8, 9 and 10 (Fig. 7,8,9)

8. Normal 0 0 1 16 92 1 1 112 11.773 0 0 0 Focusing solely on the social website that you use the most: How long have you been using this social web site?		Response Percent	Response Total
1	2-6 months	3%	3
2	7-12 months	15%	15
3	More than 12 months	82%	82

Fig. 7   Response to Question 8 of the Survey

9. Normal 0 0 1 7 43 1 1 52 11.773 0 0 0 How many times per week do you visit this website?		Response Percent	Response Total
1	1-2 times	6%	6
2	3-7 times	29%	29
3	8-15 times	27%	27
4	More than 15	38%	38

Fig. 8   Response to Question 9 of the Survey

10. Normal 0 0 1 9 56 1 1 68 11.773 0 0 0 How much time (on average) do you spend on the website during each visit?		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Less than 10 minutes	29.3%	29
2	11-30 minutes	41.4%	41
3	30 minutes to - 1hour	19.2%	19
4	More than an hour	10.1%	10

Fig. 9   Response to Question 10 of the Survey

The results show that the respondents communicate regularly with each other on Facebook. The fact that the majority share the same film preferences and senti-

ments regarding the most iconic film star signalises distinct similarities and a shared aesthetic preferences. One can also conclude that, because of the intensive rate of communication between the respondents in Facebook, together with the distinct similarities, a group has formed on Facebook. As previously stated, more and more groups have emerged due to the individualisation process that takes place in society. The shared friends that I invited to partake in my survey had chosen this specific online-platform, without any exclusivity or limited time period. The answers given to the questions referring to music choice, favourite film and media-figure reveal an aesthetic basis as motivation[16] for what connects these individuals. In order to define a subculture more specifically, it would be necessary to ascertain the shared aesthetic standards and cultural values. This would make specialised knowledge of subcultures a prerequisite. This proved to be equally difficult to ascertain from my questionnaire; as was the precise determination of the term 'subculture'.

After I had conducted the survey, I then intensified the theoretical basis for my findings, especially in view of more sociological topics (trend-analysis, multi-tasking), psychological aspects, such as the question of identity (Bauman, Foucault, Erikson et al.), as well as from a business management point of view. For example, company ethics, economic ethics, in general.

The theoretical part then brought me to further consider, which group identity had formed in the subculture, more specifically how the identity of each group member is defined, and whether the answers to these questions could help me identify the value-settings of a subculture, or otherwise suffice to help define the term 'subculture'.

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[16] Due to society's individualisation process, whereby stylistic groups then emerge from target groups (for market-research purposes). The classic definition of a target group is derived from a lifestyle, that is lived outwardly. The evident particularity of the group I targeted with my survey, is that the majority have in actual fact real-life relationships with each other. This situation opens up many possibilities for online-marketing because information distribution can occur via mouth to mouth communication or from email account to email account, within real-life groups. This presents an enormous potential for marketing, which becomes even more potent when a product being advertised by a company obtains 'linking value' within a group, and subsequently leads to communitisation within the group i.e. subculture. Thereby, products then become indicators of belonging to that group; a conjunctive element built into the interaction taking place within the group. If firms grasp the opportunity for marketing, then their products can become a substantial yet vital component ('linking-value') of such groups.

This would require a precise determination of the term 'group' i.e. of the term 'subculture'. This may initially be paradoxical, however, it is apparent that cliques form on a temporary basis, based on shared aesthetic standards and cultural values, which is what affiliates the individuals in the groups with one another. Therefore, marketing based on subculture preferences must then aim to find a docking site that allows the group to incorporate the product or the message appropriately into their value-settings.

6.2 Results of the Survey Based on the Theoretical Foundation

The initial hypothesis I posed changed due to the theoretical research I conducted. I found that the issue of identity had moved into the foreground. I then had to address the following questions whilst considering Bauman's theories on identity[17].

How is this represented on online-platforms, and how can these longings be identified?

I therefore considered question 17 of my questionnaire (Fig. 5), which could assist me in my approach to the changes made to my hypothesis.

17. Normal 0 0 1 7 44 1 1 54 11.773 0 0 0 Please select the two topics that you consider to be most important in your life?		Response Percent	Response Total
Environment		11%	11
Music		20%	20
Politics		1%	1
Family		61%	61
Humour		21%	21
Friends		71%	71
Wellbeing		28%	28
Other:		16%	16

Fig. 10   Response to Question 17 of the Survey

Question 17 of the questionnaire addressed what the respondents viewed to be the two most important things to them. 71% of the respondents chose friends, and 62% chose family.

The answers to question 17 reveal that the respondents rank their personal attachments to family and friends highly.

The research being conducted concerning the mutations of values, in an attempt to assimilate attachment ('Choices and Bonds') in today's "sensual-society" (Horx and Wippermann, 1996, p. 45) coincides with these suggestive results. Because of the Value-Paradigm-Curve of the last 50 years (Fig. 11) one can conclude that the initial phase of the economic boom after the second world war, lasted until approxi-

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[17] Based on a study conducted with teenagers, Bauman (2007, p.8) came to the conclusion that school boys and girls use their personal profiles on networking-sites to boast about their qualities, in order to draw attention, gain recognition and acceptance. They want to remain in contention, socially; they are seduced, pressured and forced, merchandise an attractive and desirable product, themselves, in order to increase their market-value.

In doing so, the relationships they form with each other are not characterised by direct communication with fellow human beings, social contact or intimacy; they can avoid personal encounters in virtual worlds.

On the one hand, they express a longing for social encounters, and on the other hand, they are imprisoned in these virtual worlds, which displays the identity's ambiguous nature.

mately 1970. The prevailing authoritative values during this phase were diligence, order, discipline and obedience (Horx, 1996, p.45). These were then replaced by a second phase of prosperity, in which passion, pleasure, desire, self-awareness and hedonism became predominant values. The third phase around approximately 1990, value systems were remixed, whereby the authoritative and self-centred values were combined.
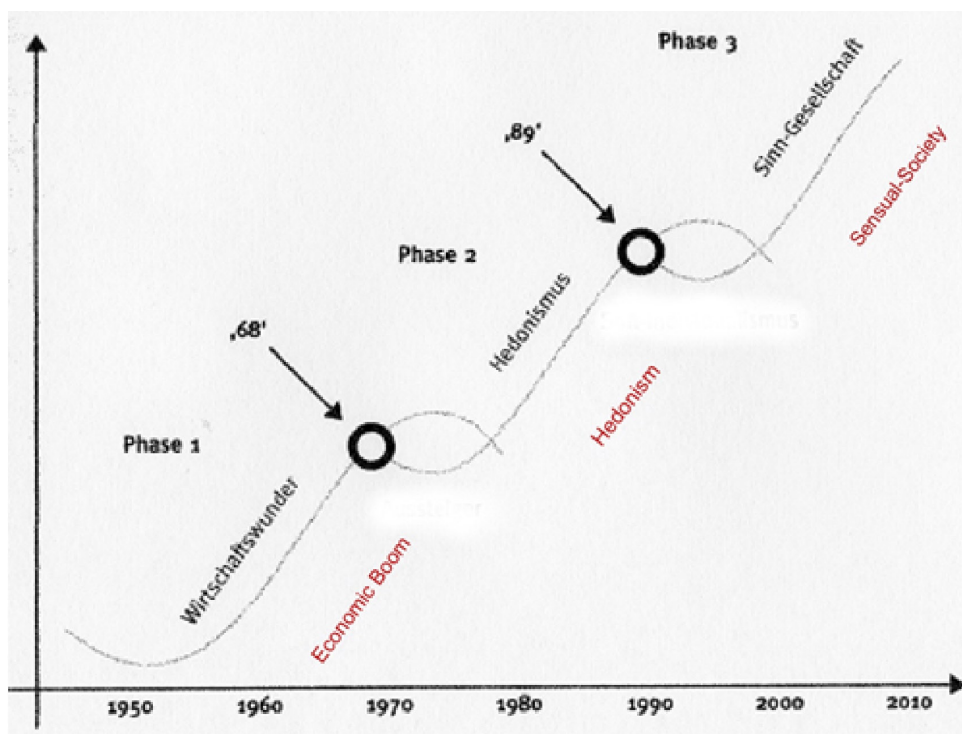
Fig. 11 - Value-Revolution based on the Value-Paradigm-Curves of the Last 50 Years
(Horx and Wippermann, 1996, p. 45)

Society is quickly reaching its limits because of these self-centred and egoistic attributes (phase 3), and the promises of economic security and that the future held something good for everyone, no longer applied. Therefore, society is searching for new ways to combine values that serve their commitments with those that serve their personal freedom (Choices and Bonds). Friendships, reciprocity, fairness and honesty have become guiding values.

With this in mind, one can conclude that the answers to questions 17 are an indication of this shift in values, as long as 71% of the respondents rate friends as most to them in life. Simultaneously, the answers to question 17 could also be a reflection of the respondents' yearning for the past, indicated by 61% of the respondents including family as being most important to them in life. In this instance, family can been seen in correlation with childhood and teenage experiences. The fact that 'friends' ranks higher than 'family' could be an indication of the need for personal encounters, compassionate exchange, social activity and intimacy, amongst the respondents on online social platforms. This not only makes the value-setting amongst the re-

spondents apparent, but also reveals an aspect of the term 'subculture' with regards to friendship and interaction between human beings. Unfortunately I was not able to extract further revelations concerning value-settings and the definition of the term subculture due to the non-specific and incomplete phrasing of the questionnaire .

The following chapter will present suggestions for improvement for the company PC Allstars based on the results obtained from the questionnaire and the insights gained into trend-analysis.

7. Suggestions for Improvements: PC Allstars

7.1 Suggestions for Improvement and Trend-Analysis

7.1.1 Pull-Principle

In reference to the Chapter I. 1., online-marketing is already in play when a company has online representation, and that communication on the internet is defined through interactivity. This means that potential customers play an active role in deciding which information he or she chooses to access; when he or she chooses to do so and for how long. The potential customer actively decides to access a specific website. Therefore, this pull-principle implies that online-marketing has to provide a stimulus to attract attention to a website. If this stimulus is missing the website will go unseen, and the customer will move on. PC Allstars should therefore make it a priority to develop a stimulus for the website, together with the client.

7.1.2 Branch Particulars - Textile Branch (Fashion)

Textile fashion trends boast an independent existence, that is already evident through colour-trends in the fashion world, and which are stipulated by influential prescriptive factors, such is the case at Color Marketing Group.[18] Should PC Allstars suggest colour options for their client's website, regarding the product palette they wish to display, then PC Allstars should allude to how Color Marketing Group determines their colours.

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[18] An international, non-profit organisation, that engages over 1300 designers. Twice a year the organisation holds a conference to determine new colour-trends. The members of this organisation meet this objective by implementing the scanning process, described above in Chapter I. 4. c. aa., whereby practical trend-analysis is conducted with regards to colours. The specific feature being the determination of future developments. The economic sector of the textile industry holds to these stipulations for pragmatic reasons. That is to say, that if the whole industry (in this case the textile industry) suddenly requires material to be in a specific colour, then it has to be available in fabrics, leather etc. as well as in the required quantity; until it is no longer in demand. However, this is only possible ahead of schedule in order to foresee any colour pigment and raw material shortages http://www.colormarketing.org/media/about cmg/color forecasting process.htm

7.1.3 Scanning

In Chapter I. 4. 4, scanning was presented as a fundamental method of trend-analysis. Therefore, it would be advisable to conduct scanning in preparation for the first meeting with Global Westfra Ltd.

Phase 1

When scanning cultural surfaces, semiotic patterns, phrasing, certain topics et al are attained in order to be grouped in stylistic-categories. Thereby, the analysis of print media as well as products, films, packaging, etc. is placed in the foreground. Respective market leaders of various media fittingly represent the quality of a market sector best, which means that no special consideration has to be made for the less successful or prominent media (with the exception of so-called ‚niche-products‘). Therefore, PC Allstars would be required to scan print media, especially the market leaders, that specialise in fashion and textiles. On the German market, these would include the 'Frankfurter Allgemeine' and 'Süddeutsche' newspapers; the 'Zeit', 'Spiegel', 'Vogue' and 'Brigitte' magazines, to name a few. An analysis of the semiotic patterns in such media, regarding textiles or fashion could have been compiled, and the styles classified. This would have then shown a tendency in patterns and style classifications, that would have facilitated processing quality materials or otherwise lower quality materials for textile production.

Phase 2

In Phase 2 the trend-analyst is responsible for grouping the semiotic signs of certain stylistic-groupings that have been determined. However, the phenomena founded on semiotics must be supported by background material and statistics. Nonetheless, this raises the question as to which statistics and sociological determinants portray certain tendencies in the fashion or textile branches in connection with quality materials. In this case, an indicator would be a clear increase in sales of companies that produce quality and distribute materials like cashmere or silk. The aforementioned change in society's values (beginning around 1990) could also serve as an indicator, after which the promises of economic success in that each individual would enjoy a financially secure future were no longer valid, and new guiding values such as friendships, reciprocity, fairness and honesty became more relevant. Therefore, the use of quality materials could also be suggestive of a need for modest living that has been discovered on a sociological level. It is apparent that the acquisition of high quality is the result of meeting certain qualitative standards that also ensure longevity. Modesty can therefore be understood as a result of frequently attained new acquisitions being more sustainable.[19] The term 'basic' originated from a feeling of ad

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[19] We can also draw on the trend known as 'basic', which has been a term since the 1990s. 'Basic' expresses the consumers desire for simple, clean and essential things, without ornamentation - 'less is more'. The term 'basic' can also been seen as connected to the stress consumers experience because of a feeling of ad nauseam that comes with an oversupply of products. American studies have shown that the need for diversity diminishes with larger incomes, and richer consumers show a preference for sustainable products; their criteria for buying reflects that they no longer need to constantly purchase new things. (Horx and Wippermann, 1996, p.60)

nauseam (Horx and Wippermann, 1996, p.62), and this will remain an issue for society (beginning approximately around 1990), with regards to society's value changes. The question is whether 'basic' won't ultimately become the most important trend altogether, or become significant for those with lower incomes (who acquire cheap products of lesser quality), when all the price wars are fought out to the bitter end and the topic regarding the price of a product is finally exhausted.

Phase 3

If the tendency of processing high-quality materials or those of lesser quality had been established by means of the assessed semiotic signs, and secured with the relevant statistical and sociological data, then one would also be able to check whether there are niche-concepts in the services area and products, that make use of the trend on a small scale and are successful. Phase 3 therefore suggests that the firm Global Westfra Ltd. should have done another intensive search for competitors, who provide both manufacturing plants abroad, as well as maintain their own production site. Also search for competitors, who only use quality materials or otherwise have experience with working with materials of inferior quality, when it comes to mediating for production facilities. The results of Phase 1 and 2 would have revealed and confirmed successful concepts in both directions.

The following would have been proposed to Global Westfra Ltd. based on the results that were gained: Regarding the tendency to produce high quality textiles, the company could have been told as early as at the first consultation, that the website's design had to specifically highlight the quality requirements that need to be met by productions facilities regarding textile production. The website would have made use of appropriate images and text to demonstrate that qualified personnel is available, and that state of the art machinery is used to carefully process high-quality material. It could have also been pointed out that qualified staff is made available on site, which is also trained to handle creative processes should a problem arise. Due to the existing conditions for production on site, it can also be pointed out that lower-grade materials would not be treated inferiorly when considering an established tendency to use lower-grade materials.

Regarding Okitex, Westfra Global's own production company, that manufactures high quality clothing items, an established tendency for processing high-quality materials could have been compiled; namely, that Okitex has always used such materials, and can therefore draw on relevant experiences in the high quality textile production.[20]

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[20] The proposals made thus far relate to aspects of design (images and text) that have to do with the website's structure, links to the various parts of the website and the categorisation of the website-indexes; but they also relate to layout, colour, typography and composition. Nonetheless, PC Allstars should also consider website-design innovations and electronic developments (special animation elements), such as the integration of flash-video (moving image) and external links. However, I will not elaborate the specific technical requirements at this point.

Momentarily, I would like to return to what was mentioned earlier in Chapter I, namely that, PC Allstars has to ensure, that once tendencies and trends have been established and determined by a company's employees during the scanning process whilst searching for evidence of a trend assumption (Phase 2), the standards used to come to the hypotheses presented have to then be disclosed and reviewed. Also, because of the information flood with which employees of both print and electronic media are confronted, numerous unprecedented opportunities present themselves in the clients's favour, especially when it comes to evaluating the information gathered. More than ever, employees at PC Allstars are required to disclose their results by means of clear questioning, testable hypotheses, reproducible evaluations and by distinguishing between interpretations and speculations. It was concluded that presence of mind, creativity and tolerance in terms of fairness are key characteristics that need to come to the fore and that employees have to embody.

Global Westfra Ltd., that has their own production site, Okitex, expressed the wish to have a clean and timeless structure for their website, with a classic design. I also pointed out qualitative standards that guarantee longevity as being a direct consequence of wanting to produce high-quality textiles, such as those produced by Okitex. Knowing that Okitex manufactures products that are not designed to shorten the product life cycle (products of lesser quality don't last long), PC Allstars could also propose that Global Westfra Ltd adopt an operative mindset, in that the company strengthens corporate ethical principles referred to in the-integrative concept described earlier. In doing so Global Westfra Ltd. i.e. Okitex, will indicate that principles of profit maximization and also those pertaining to sustainability of developed products are predominantly positioned in the forefront. In doing so the company complies with its corporate ethics that correlate with above mentioned new social guidance values, such as fairness or honesty, in terms of the sustainability of the products offered.

PC Allstars could make a note of pointing this out, especially in connection to the Global Westfra's website design.

7.2 Suggestions for Improvement and Questionnaire (Monitoring)

As presented in Chapter II. 8.1, the firm Global Westfra Ltd. expressed the wish for a website with a classic design (clean and timeless structure).

Below we see that the majority of the respondents (41%) would prefer their website to be designed with a simple and clean structure.

14. Normal 0 0 1 13 76 1 1 93 11.773 0 0 0 If you were able to design (or if you have designed) your own website, what would/ does it look like?			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Simple and clean		41%	41
2	Exciting and fun		11%	11
3	Innovative and unique		35%	35
4	Entertaining and attractive		9%	9
5	Other:		4%	4

Fig. 12   Question 14 of the Survey

The group I interviewed, which displayed a large number of the subculture properties I detected, could confirm Global Westfra's wishes regarding their website design. As mentioned in Chapter I. 4.4, monitoring can be seen as part of the scanning process used for trend-analysis. This sub-area reflects the image of a subculture in motion. This method is based on the hypothesis that the 'break from the familiar or norm' can be detected in certain scenarios. The questionnaire was distributed in a sub-group. The fact that the vast majority of respondents, 41%, would want a website with a simple and clean design, allows me to draw the conclusion that a corresponding tendency or trend is visible in this scenario or subculture.

This deduction could then be used to demonstrate that Global Westfra Ltd. wishes for their website design has been underpinned by a survey conducted with a sub-group.

8. Synopsis of Research Findings

To recap, my initial hypothesis changed due my experience during my internships. From wanting to find the common denominator between innovation management and design, I then found that I also had to consider how subcultures express themselves on online platforms, and how one would go about identifying these subcultures.

Subsequently, this led me to explore the concept of identity, which brought me to compile a questionnaire, which could be a possible aid in approaching my hypothesis.

The answers I received to some questions led me to conclude that the group emerged, possibly due to similar aesthetic preferences. I presented the presumption that subcultures emerge because individuals, who share aesthetic preferences and cultural values come together for an uncertain period of time. In order to prove this one would have to specify these preferences and values, which can be achieved after gathering information on subcultures and defining the term 'subculture'. Unfortunately, the questions in the questionnaire were not specific enough.

The theoretical research gained a new focus. I then began to consider whether sub cultural groups had specific identities, as well as the identity of individual members within subcultures in order to learn more about the shared aesthetic standards and cultural values, the subculture's value-settings. In the hope that Bauman's theories on the ambivalent nature of identity would bring me closer to grasping these correlations, I then aimed to find out what kind of behaviour displayed on online platforms would reflect this ambivalence, and how one can identify the desires or aspirations of the individuals detained in these virtual worlds.

After evaluating the questionnaire, I noted that personal ties to friends and family are highly prioritised among the respondents. Also, with regards to the sociological aspect pertaining to the changes in society's values since about 1990, I come to the assumption that the majority of the respondents have displayed a desire for the past (family) and for personal encounters (friends) based on their response. These aspirations could therefore reflect an aspect of the value-settings of the group who partook in the survey.

The above is one example of the information one can draw from a survey conducted on an online platform, whereby the individuals that frequent such social platforms (in this case Facebook) can serve as a reference for future market-niches. Again, I would have had to include many more specific questions to come to attain precise definitions of the issues raised.

The following is a summary of the suggestions for improvement for the company PC Allstars. These suggestions are derived from methods applied for trend-analysis and are related to some of the questions in the questionnaire, which could be implemented when it comes to customer care and in preparation for the first consultation, in this case with Global Westfra Ltd.:

* PC Allstars could have heeded the colour concepts of the Colour Marketing Group when it came to making suggestions for Global Westfra's website colour palette and the products depicted.

* Scanning print media market-leaders would indicate a tendency, which involves the processing of high-quality materials or those of lesser quality materials for textile manufacturing.

* This process would have proven that tendency is well worth considering, based on the evaluation of statistics (concise sales figures of companies that manufacture and sell high-quality materials), and because of sociological findings (due to changes in guiding-values and the sociologically identifiable need for modesty).

* Westfra Global Ltd. could have then been presented with the industry's successful niche-concepts, which would have secure profitable results

* The proposed website design could have emphasized the quality of the production sites (with regards to qualified personnel, and in terms of the experience manning cutting-edge machinery) in view of the tendency of processing high-quality materials.

* The site could have also stressed that Westfra Global Ltd. has valuable experience when it comes to the production of high quality textiles because of the company's affiliate, Okitex.

* PC Allstars could have elaborated the fact that Westfra Global Ltd. manufactures products with longevity, because Okitex only produces high-quality textiles. This would have also highlighted Westfra Gloabal's business concept, and place the quality of their products in the fore, and indicate that the company's corporate ethic principles are a priority.

* Finally, with the aid of a questionnaire, PC Allstars could have demonstrated that the monitoring process would have revealed that the company's design preferences for their website (a clear structure and classic design) has been confirmed as a tendency or trend.

Conclusion

In order to determine how trend-analysis methods could be used more innovatively, evaluating the survey, as well as presenting Foucault's views on identity, it became necessary to explore and elaborate the definition of subcultures and identity.

Foucault states that, "[our] churches tell us: you are a child of God. Our politicians tell us: you are an American (or an Australian, or an Indian, or...). Our televisions tell us; you are a consumer. We are told who we are, and as a result we rarely ask." (May, 2006, p. 2) This is also valid today, if we substitute or replace the church and politicians with other instances. Herewith he states, that in order to find who we are, we should first question those circumstances we think we are sure of.

In relation to this, I was led to conclude that the ability to question things is the driving force of innovation.

Furthermore, I perceive the ability or even the obligation - with which Foucault challenges intellectuals -, to question our circumstances as being even more necessary in today's day and age, because the technological developments in the age of technology have come to demand that people multi-task. I presented this concept by elaborating on the distribution battle that takes place within the mind when it searches for the information it needs and simultaneously reserves the attention span to do so.

This has led to the conclusion that companies setting the requirement for employees to be creative, does not necessarily mean that their employees will develop more innovative ideas. As in the example of Google, whereby the employees are obligated to utilise 20% of their work hours to work on their own creative project[21], however this does not mean that Google is more innovative than other entrepreneurs.

The issue raised by Foucault implies a conscious process being initiated that involves reinventing oneself. Only then can employees tackle their tasks with a lot more drive to be innovative.

That is not to say that trend-analysis would solve this problem. In order to do this, trend-analysts required more evidence on the issue raised by Bauman about the ambivalent state of individuals' today, with regards to their identities. However, trend-analysis can be a means for identifying and attaining information on subcultures that relates to current affairs or conditions; as presented in the suggestions for improvement for the firm PC Allstars.

These questions could be addressed through further research in order to identify and help pinpoint specific subcultures. Only then can one compile a questionnaire,

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[21] See Horx, 2009, p. 298

specifically tailored to each subculture, that would produce concrete answers to the questions that firstly reflect the identity that has emerged in each subculture; secondly, highlight the identity exhibited by the individual members of that specific subculture as well as help detect where individuals have engaged in the process of consciously questioning things.

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Appendix

Work-Experience Protocol: PC Allstars

During my internship at PC Allstars I mainly worked within website design, more specifically, designing the website for the company Westfra Global Ltd.. This entailed general research concerning the specific branch the client represented, prior to scheduling meetings with new clients, thereby, enabling the client to be presented with first impressions and comparisons.

The points I considered in advance, in order to establish an initial directive included:
   * How the websites of competitors are structured
   * Missing components that would speak for professionalism
   * Components that are important or otherwise redundant

This approach helped me determine the presumed preferences of customers in advance before proceeding with the execution of my own ideas.

Generally, the client would be presented with a questionnaire devised by PC Allstars prior to, or at the latest, at the first meeting. This would contain specific questions concerning the form and content of the desired website. Naturally, the questions would differ depending on the branch represented by the client.

After careful evaluation, different website structures would be pitched to the client and our ideas discussed, in order to further explore the client's wishes, and more importantly needs, to facilitate them being represented appropriately on the internet.

The advantages of this approach are:
   * A reduction of misunderstandings that can occur between the company and the client,
   * Thus procuring the best possible results;
   * The wishes and desires of customers, as well as the specific branch in question being
   * Isolated during the initial stages; and subsequently analysed with the customer.

This procedure allowed PC Allstars to gain a clear understanding of the existing market, as with Westfra Global Ltd, an international company with headquarters in Frankfurt am Main. The company acts as a middle-man connecting Western European contractees with manufacturing facilities in Macedonia and Serbia, within the textile sector and best suited out of a pool of affiliates. The range of products offered by Westfra Global Ltd. encompasses premium women's wear, skirts, pants, dresses, blouses, and men's shirts.

Westfra Global Ltd. was the first client I supported whilst working at PC Allstars. At the first meeting their desire was for a clean structure to their website, with a timeless and classic design.

I studied the following websites in preparation for the initial consultation:
1. http://www.mfg.com/en/textiles/howitworks/textiles-how-it-works.jsp
2. http://www.apparelsearch.com/clothing_industry_production_sourcing_services.htm
3. http://www.avicstar.co.uk/page9.php
4. http://fashiontribes.typepad.com/
5. http://www.apparelsolutions.co.uk/about.htm
6. http://www.iafnet.com/

The selection of websites to be analysed were based on the following criteria:
* Structure
* Links between the different parts of the website
* Categories of website indexes
* Layout, colour, typography and composition
* Images and (if existing) design of Flash elements

The first consultation was set up to provide the customer with an initial impression of the quality of certain websites and what similar companies have opted for. We then went on the explain that quality and professionalism are website attributes that leave a first, yet lasting impression of the company, along the lines of Gottfried Keller: 'Clothes Make the Man'.

Many companies try to economise with their websites. Many companies are unaware of how important a figurehead a website is for a company. In the process of presenting and discussing different design possibilities a customer then realizes the importance making the right decisions concerning representation on the internet.

I presented proposals for various websites at the first meeting. I used snap shots to present various attributes of the different websites, juxtaposing the positive aspects with the bad, thus displaying how websites and their attributes differ and thereby illustrating why these are either good or bad.

In an almost seamless process after the initial meeting, I developed suggestions for websites that could interest the client, by gravitating towards the positive aspects, yet remaining aware of the negative, in order to present my case.

This experiences with research practices were very beneficial in revealing the problem that often web designers and customers differ in their expectations. These

differences usually do not become obvious until shortly before the website is complete, after designers have invested many hours of work.

Good preparation prior to the initial consultation, including preparing a questionnaire for the client, and a detailed discussion with PC Allstars prevented this situation from occurring. The creation of websites is a creative process in which the customer should be included earlier on. Failing to integrate the client's wishes and expectations in the development phase could have negative consequences, which would call PC Allstars professionalism into question.