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Smack Technology White Paper

Smack Community Building Software

The philosophy behind Smack is simple: to help companies establish a stronger relationship with their consumers. The most effective way to achieve this goal is to build Brand Communities. However, building Brand Communities is anything but simple, especially when the heart of any Brand Community exists online. With communities popping up in all sectors of the Internet, not a single software is readily available that encompasses all three necessities to building Brand Communities online: Social Networking Tools, Content Management Tools, and Statistical Metrics and Analytics that describe key community characteristics. That is, until now.

Over the past year, Smack has been working diligently on the only software that will not only build and nurture Brand Communities online, but also help marketers pull valuable data concerning each and every member of that community.

The goal of this white paper is to provide an overall description of the Smack Community Building Software with special attention given to describing the software's Social Networking and Content Management Tools.

Introducing Brand Communities

Smack took a long look at some of the world's top brands and found the most successful businesses all have one thing in common: a loyal following of everyday consumers. Consumers that form vibrant and loyal communities around a brand, what Smack calls Brand Communities.

Smack defines a Brand Community as a group of people interacting with one another based on their love of a brand. Brand Communities act like any other social network, complete with community based interaction, community histories, hierarchies and most of all, fierce loyalty. So building Brand Communities requires software that allows you to nurture the characteristics of Brand Communities as well as identify and empower key members of the community.

Nurturing the Characteristics of Brand Communities

In a landmark 2001 study, Albert M. Muniz, Jr. and Thomas C. O'Guinn, at the University of Chicago, set out to give a modern definition to the term Brand Community as well as a description of the common characteristics inherent in Brand Communities. In studying the Brand Communities pertaining to the Ford Bronco, Macintosh, and Saab, Muniz and O'Guinn detail three main characteristics found in Brand Communities that are also shared with traditional communities; Consciousness of a Kind, Shared Rituals and Traditions, and Moral Responsibility.



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Consciousness of a Kind

Muniz and O’Guinn define Consciousness of a Kind as the intrinsic connection that community members feel toward one another, and the collective sense of difference from others not in the community. It is a shared knowing of belonging. Anyone who uses a Mac, for example, will have a greater propensity to find common ground with other Mac users, while at the same time, spitting wads of venom at Microsoft groupies. And the same is true of the reverse.

Rituals and Traditions

The second characteristic defined by Muniz and O’Guinn, Rituals and Traditions, perpetuates the community’s shared history, culture, and consciousness. Saab community members often discuss the company’s heritage in aviation. Embracing the company’s history as proof of its superior engineering prowess. Shared Rituals and Traditions provide legitimacy to community membership by helping to exclude those who are not “in the know” and thus not true brand enthusiasts.

Moral Responsibility

The final characteristic determined by Muniz and O’Guinn is Moral Responsibility. In true Brand Communities, moral responsibility is felt as a sense of duty or obligation to the community as a whole, and to its individual members. And in times of threat to the community, moral responsibility inspires collective action.

Identifying and Managing Key Community Members

Building a community is as much about opening channels of communication as it is about understanding the members of your Brand Community and empowering the most loyal. In understanding the members of your community, let’s look at the characteristics of three member types made famous by The Tipping Point Author Malcolm Gladwell; Connectors, Mavens and Salesmen.

Connectors

In a community, connectors are members that know a large array of people and have a propensity toward making introductions amongst their contacts. Due to their nature, a connector will typically know people across social, cultural, professional, and economic circles, and thereby have an opportunity to bring otherwise disparate groups together.



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Mavens

A maven is defined as an expert in a particular field or subject matter. A successful maven is not just an opinionated blowhard, but someone who has gathered information and impressions, and is able to provide valuable insight to community members based on their experience and insight. Their expertise may be on products, services, community development, culture or other community values. Community members will respect their input on whichever subject they are recognized as an expert in.

Salesmen

In the context of a community, salesmen are not Glengarry Glenn Ross graduates, their influence is subtle. Rather than a direct effort to persuade, it's their charisma that leads others to follow them. In this regard, salesmen are trendsetters within a community, with other members feeling comfortable enough to follow a new pattern of behaviour, support a new product, or engage in a new social circle that a salesman has embraced.

Smack Inc has adopted these three characteristics as guiding rods to help build and nurture our clients' Brand Communities. To help us and our clients manage these characteristics, we need to use tools that encourage social networking as well provide us and users full freedom to manage all content that exists or that is added to the online community portal.

Smack Community Building Software provides a number of both Social Networking and Content Management Tools to help manage the key characteristics and members of the community. But more importantly, by incorporating all of these tools in one software package, we can gather important statistics to help answer questions like:

- Which members most exhibit the characteristics of a connector, maven, or salesman?
- How are these members fulfilling their role within the community?
- How much interaction do they have with other members?
- Which members are most active in the community?
- Which members can we target for more inclusion?
- Which members can we target for certain marketing initiatives or referral programs?

Now, let's review the Architecture and Feature Set, including Statistics, of the Smack Community Building Software.



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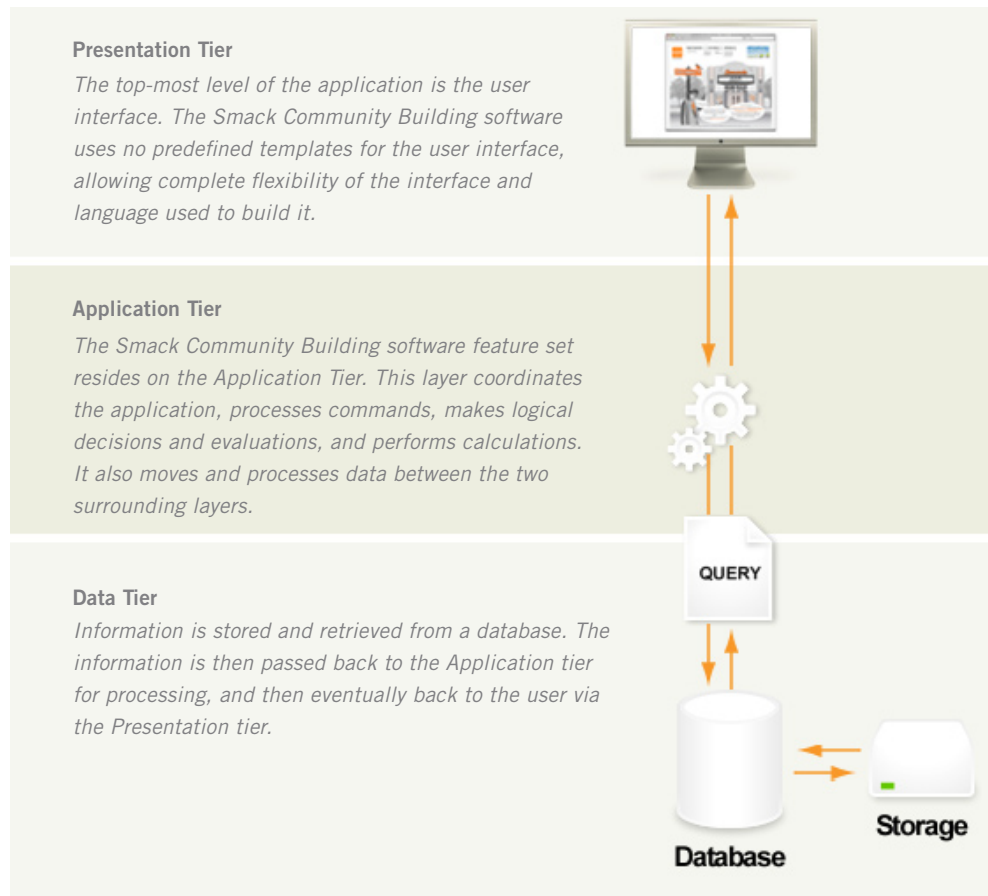
Smack Community Building Software Architecture

In keeping both marketing requirements and development efficiency in mind, the Smack Community Building Software was architected to maximize the flexibility of its use in developing community based websites, campaign sites and corporate sites, while ensuring that sites could be deployed as quickly as possible, with little training for both marketers and developers.

With these requirements in mind, the Smack Community Building Software Architecture employs the following:

- A three-tier architecture to support separation of the Presentation Tier, Application Tier, and Data Tier. Host only the Application Tier with Smack, maintaining complete control over your user interface and data, or choose to host all tiers with Smack.
- The public user interface uses no predefined templates. Through web services, you can build your own user interface using Flash, HTML, or whatever language of your choice, allowing the maximum flexibility to achieve your requirements for design, layout, and functionality.

Three-tier Architecture





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Smack Community Building Software Feature Set

The Smack Community Building Software feature set was defined from the ground up to incorporate the toolset a marketer will require to cultivate their own Brand Community. This toolset includes a variety of Content Management and Social Networking tools and the statistics derived from these tools to assist a marketer in understanding their users' behaviour. Now, let's review the key features available to you and your users.

How users can connect with one another.

Friends

Friends List

With the Smack Community Building Software, you have the ability to create a **Friends List** to help connect with all your offline and online acquaintances. Once you have connected with your friends, you can begin sharing content with each other.

Friend History

With **Friend History**, you can use options such as **School, Work, Social Group, Club** and more, to keep track of where you first met your friends, and how your relationship has evolved.

Interesting People

Adding a person to your **Interesting People** list will allow you to track things they do within the site, without the extra step of becoming friends. If you're interested in another community member's writing, for example, you can be instantly notified of the next article they post.

Association

Through the **Association** feature, the Smack Community Building Software will automatically associate you with others who attended the same schools, organizations, workplaces, social groups and more.

Defining and Describing Friends and Interesting People

Select from various relationship types to accurately define the relationship you have with your Friends and Interesting People. You can also tag Friends and Interesting People, with any information about the person that will help in defining your relationship.



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Degrees of Separation

With *Degrees of Separation* you can find and connect with new people through your Friends.

Organizing People

Your Friends List is fully customizable to help you organize groups of family, friends, coworkers, alumni and more.

How users can work with content.

Personal Profiles

With Bio / Profile pages, you can perform a number of tasks to help other users understand who you are. You can manage your personal details, link to your favourite bulletin board threads, photos and other media, add and edit your Friends list, store media (such as music, photos and videos), manage subscriptions, purchase details and history, and so much more.

Conversation Forums

Using the conversation forums in the Smack Brand Community Software allows you to create and participate in conversations. You can bookmark conversations in your profile, invite others to join in the conversation and subscribe to the conversation using RSS or email.

Comments and Ratings

A robust commenting tool can be added to just about any of your content, allowing you to post thoughts on news, blog entries, media (photos, music, videos) and more. You can also rate content that you like and dislike. The data generated by ratings can be used to aggregate similar content that you may enjoy.

Media Galleries

The Smack Community Building Software comes with a full featured media gallery which allows you to post and manage a variety of media, including photos, videos, music and more. Anyone you share your media with can then comment, rate and recommend your media to other community members.

Search

Track down exactly what you're looking for with the Search feature. Search site-wide for content by keyword, subject, exact phrase or category searches.



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How marketers can manage content.

Inline Content Editing

Managing content couldn't be easier. With the Smack Community Building Software you can add and edit your content in the same way and on the same page that you and your users view it. Simply log in, browse to the page you'd like to edit, and you'll see edit buttons that allow you to change your content.

Content Approval

Total control over your content. The content approval workflow allow you to manage who can publish content on your website, and who approves or denies content requests.

Content Freshness Reminder

Set dates for when content should be published and archived. This powerful feature allows you to create pages in advance, and have them publish automatically. Keep your site current by archiving older content that may no longer be relevant.

Task List

The **Task List** feature is an administrative tool to help you stay on top of the daily tasks associated with running a successful website. Each day will highlight required tasks including, content that needs to be approved, news expiry and freshness alerts, article expiry and freshness alerts, poll responses and more.

Quick Poll

By embedding a poll on your site, you can quickly gauge your viewers opinions on any given topic. All responses can be tracked as to how many viewers have viewed and answered the poll, who answered the poll and how they answered the poll.

Events Calendar

With the **Events Calendar** you can post upcoming events, complete with event details like time, place, duration, and more. And by using other features of the Smack Community Building Software, you can create hype by publicizing a new event in your news section, add information about an event in your newsletter, send out event invitations and information with your mailing list, post photos, comments and so much more.

News and Press

Keep your audience up to date with all the latest comings and goings of your business with the **News and Press** feature. List the top 5 articles on your front page, list your articles by date, provide article titles and/or short descriptions, choose between a text and/or PDF upload option, and so much more.



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Professional Directory

The **Professional Directory** feature can help you promote business and partnerships by providing a list of recommend companies and professionals for your members and visitors. Allow members to advertise and promote their business to other members of your site, view and maintain statistics on viewership and clickthroughs. post descriptions of services, maps and more.

Newsletters

Create added value around your Brand with the Smack **Newsletter** feature. Highlight **Feature** and **Must Read** articles, allow for easy scanning and browsing with a Newsletter Table of Contents. Once you're done, you can post your newsletter on your website and/or use your Address Book to email your members.

Document Management

Store, organize and retrieve your business documents and media safely and easily with the **Document Management** feature. Share your documents with others or keep them private; you set the level of accessibility.

User Centric Content

The Smack Brand Community Software delivers users the content they're most likely to be interested in by evaluating their past activities such as comments on postings, ratings, page visits and more. This allows your users to get an personal view of your content, and access to the content that interests them most.

Links

Highlight points of interests and help your users get their fill of information by using the Smack **Links** feature. Sort links by Category for quick and easy viewing, post links site wide or keep them embedded within a links specific area, publish short descriptions of every link and so much more.

Advertising System

By embedding the **Advertising System** on your site, you can offer a wide variety of ad space to help generate income and provide site visitors with more content they may be interested in. Select to add horizontal banner ads, vertical banner ads, or both, schedule how long you would like the ad to be shown, see statistics including clickthroughs and views, provide a password protected area where the advertiser can see statistics for their ads and more.



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User Management

Divide your user list into categories for easy retrieval and targeted email, search through your list for targeting specifics and member traits, show member statistics like response rate, clickthroughs, conversion rates, polls, and more.

Key statistics available to the marketer to address campaigns, content development and site design, and define member characteristics.

A great feature set offers little value if you cannot understand how the content being inputted and retrieved through the feature set affects user interaction. Community building offers new challenges in understanding characteristics of your users. The Smack Community Building Software offers the metrics that you require to understand site usage, campaign success, customer characteristics and more. Let's take a look at some of these metrics.

Defining Community Members

We've already discussed that essential members of a Brand Community fall into three character types, Connectors, Mavens, and Salesmen. The Smack Community Building Software offers a number of statistical tools that track the behaviour of users on the site and grade them within the three essential community member categories. By identifying these members, marketers can target them with specific campaigns to encourage buzz, new enrollment, content development and more.

Goals, Conversions and Paths

To track a web site's performance in guiding visitors through the site, the Smack Community Building Software can help you determine ideal paths your visitors should take. These Control Paths can have entry points and exit points, with exit points being communications or marketing objectives such as purchases, downloads, member sign-ups, poll entries and more. Once a control path is set, statistics will be compiled to measure how well visitors are following the intended site path, and where in the site conversion rates can be improved.

Page Real Estate

Does the area of the page effect what links are clicked? What information is leading to a clickthrough? The Smack Community Building Software will show how the page layout effects clickthroughs and give you the power to rearrange items to favour site objectives



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Cross Selling

Based on the behaviour of a site visitor, you will have the option of making product, news, survey, or article recommendations to that visitor. If a user clicks through a particular path or download, you can suggest that they may also be interested in something similar.

Purchase Notification

With the Smack Community Building Software, specific links, goal completions, downloads, and more will trigger a notification to the marketing team. Instant notification means your marketing team follows up with customers immediately, increasing the chances of new sales, up sells and leads.

Powerful Reporting

The Smack Community Building Software allows you to manage, analyze, and cross reference the data stored in your database. Reports can be conveniently exported to Excel.

For more information on the Smack Community Building Software please feel free to contact us at community@smacktechnology.com or browse to www.smacktechnology.com.