Internet Marketing Strategies for Indie Crafters

Research Proposal

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INTERNET MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR INDIE CRAFTERS

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Abstract

There are many online resources and marketing strategies that utilize the Internet that independent crafters can use to promote and market their businesses. This proposal describes how the researcher will explore these resources and strategies, as well as survey and observe crafters who already use the Internet successfully, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the online independent craft business phenomenon. The final result will be a project, in the form of a handbook or website, which will aim to help artists and crafters by making suggestions, based on the research, for how to use the Internet effectively to grow a craft business.

Keywords

artists, crafters, Internet marketing, e-commerce, self-promotion

Problem Statement

Little, if any, research has been done on the targeted topic of Internet usage by independent artists and craft persons (or crafters) for marketing and promoting their artwork. Related research has been done in the areas of small business Internet commerce (Poon & Swatman, 1999), commercial fine art Internet marketing done by businesses such as galleries and dealers (Clarke & Flaherty, 2002), and traditional (off-line) craft business strategies (Paige & Littrell, 2002). Much of this related research suggests that the Internet may be a significant new area where artists and related small businesses can apply their creative marketing approaches (Clarke & Flaherty, 2002; Lovelace, 1998; Poon & Swatman, 1999; Torres, 2002, p. 236; Wilkinson, 1996). My research will focus on the potential of the Internet as a marketing tool for the niche group of independent artists and crafters. Specifically, it will explore the two topics: the indie craft community and related marketing research.

This study will fill the gap in research regarding the Internet marketing strategies of the niche group of independent crafters, and synthesize the information gathered in order to make suggestions for how crafters can successfully use the Internet to grow their businesses. The most salient information and suggestions will be incorporated into a final project in the form of a handbook, and potentially a website, that could be made available to independent crafters interested in using the Internet to promote their business.

Conceptual Framework

Topical Literature Review

Independent crafters. The world of crafting is changing. There is a generation that learned crafty, domestic arts as children, but then may have lost the skills related to those arts and crafts in order to pursue more "important" things in life, such as professional careers. Now, many of these same people are using the skills they learned from all aspects of their lives to express themselves by making things with their hands. The Internet has become a place where artists and crafters can share their work with each other, and a broader public, in an interactive space. Some sell their work, others just enjoy making things and interacting with the fun, radical, indie, craft community online. Jean Railia (2004), creator of the online zine Getcrafty.com, explains the new generation of craft this way:

> Being crafty means living consciously and refusing to be defined bay narrow labels and categories. It's about embracing life as complicated and contradictory and, out of this chaos, constructing identities that are feminist and domestic, masculine and feminine, strong and weak. It's painting racing stripes down muscle cars and driving them in homemade skirts and high heel shoes. It's getting together to knit in cafes and building intimacy online. It's swapping clothing. It's about being fashion-obsessed and simultaneously upset by sweatshop labor practices. It's about being well read and a fan of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. It's not about being quiet or demure, but it means always trying to be nice. It's about making things with your hands. And, most important, it's about living life artistically, regardless of whether or not you are an Artist with a capital A. (p.6)

The Internet has been an igniting and uniting force for this indie craft movement by giving its participants an arena to connect and encourage each other, as well as a place to market and sell their wares. The art world of indie crafters may have been alive but disjointed before the arrival of the Internet, now this art world has spread to include everyone from the artist, to the casual reader of a crafty online blog, to the consumer

looking for fun, one-of-a-kind creations. As the Craft Revolution website stated, "the quiet thought that once whispered in the minds of a few women has quickly become a booming drumbeat that unifies hundreds across the globe. The true, magnificent meaning of craft is becoming alive again. Clearly, it is time for a revolution" (2006).

This online community of self-proclaimed "indie crafters" is the major inspiration behind my research. The combination of these independent artists and the Internet has created a dynamic community where each member can not only learn and get inspiration, but also where they can market and promote their work. Even though much of my inspiration comes from this group, I would like to explore how the Internet may be beneficial to all types of artist and crafts people who wish to sell their work. The Internet offers many resources for artists to find encouragement, ideas, and community, as well as market and promote their art. My research will explore these resources and hopefully discover which strategies and techniques are successful for marketing art and crafts on the Internet.

Related marketing literature. Due to the small amount of research focused on the Internet marketing strategies of independent artists, crafters, and small craft or art-related businesses, research from related fields is useful in understanding the narrower topic. Three major marketing topic areas that are evident in recent research literature and that are relevant to the Internet marketing strategies of small, independent craft and art-related businesses are: small business Internet commerce, commercial fine art Internet marketing done by businesses such as galleries and dealers, and traditional (off-line) craft business strategies. The literature reviewed from these three topic areas uncovered three major themes that are relevant to the marketing of small craft and art-related businesses. The first

theme is that craft and art-related businesses base their marketing strategies on different goals and definitions of success than traditional profit-centered businesses (Fillis, 2000, p. 131; Paige & Littrell, 2002). Secondly, creativity in marketing is important (Fillis, 2000; Paige & Littrell, 2002) and the Internet may be a significant new area where artists and related businesses can apply their creative marketing approaches (Clarke & Flaherty, 2002; Lovelace, 1998; Poon & Swatman, 1999; Torres, 2002, p. 236; Wilkinson, 1996). Finally, strategic alliance networks and general networking between artists and between small craft or art-related businesses can help all of the parties involved develop their general marketing practices as well as increase access to technologically-based marketing avenues (Clarke & Flaherty, 2002; Lovelace, 1998; Paige & Littrell, 2002; Torres, 2002).

People who run small, independent craft and art-related business often start their business for different reasons than other traditional profit-centered business owners. "Intrinsic factors such as personal satisfaction and the opportunity to elevate the craft tradition" are some of the criteria craft retailers use to define success (Paige & Littrell, 200, p. 1). Fillis (2000) found that "the typical arts and crafts microenterprise has been shown to take risks in terms of both the products itself and in the way in which the business is developed" (p. 131). The dedication to creativity and more personal business goals leads to the development of unique marketing strategies. Paige and Littrell's (2002) qualitative interviews of twelve craft retailers in the southern highlands region of the U.S. found that the businesses commonly noted "educating their customers about crafts, the artisans who produced the crafts, and the culture of the region" (p. 318) as a main marketing strategy. Creative strategies like this example and others, such as targeting niche, arts-exclusive markets (Clarke & Flaherty, 2002), and pooling resources with other artists or small arts-

related businesses (Torres, 2002), can help the business owners to achieve their unique personal and art-based business goals.

This creativity and originality in marketing is important to the success of small art and craft businesses. "To differentiate themselves from larger retailers who offer more standardized product assortments, smaller retailers perform better with more innovative, more unique, and higher quality product lines" (Paige & Littrell, 2002, p. 316). The Internet may be a beneficial avenue in which to pursue these innovative arts marketing strategies. Unfortunately, not much research has yet been done on Internet marketing because the technology is new and rapidly changing. Even the research that was done just five to ten years ago is dated. But despite these limitations, many researchers suggest the Internet as an area where small businesses and artists can gain exposure to a larger audience (Clarke & Flaherty, 2002, p.149; Lovelace, 1998, Paige & Littrell, 2002, p. 320; Poon & Swatman, 1999; Wilkinson, 1996). Poon and Swatman (1999) also found that even though small businesses may begin to use the internet because of the perceived benefits they only believe their businesses will gain, as opposed to actual direct quantitative benefits, the business owners reported that they did realize actual benefits in the form of new opportunities and the useful function of the Internet for communication.

Researchers have found that artists are sometimes "disconcerted about technology use" (Clarke & Flaherty, 2002, p. 146) and that small business owners lack the resources and knowledge to launch an Internet arm of their operations (Poon & Swatman, 1999). These obstacles can be overcome by the innovative implementation of strategic network alliances between artists or small arts-related businesses (Torres, 2002). A case study of a network of ceramic artists in Ireland conducted by Torres found that by collaborating as a network and hiring a project manager, the group was able to book advertising space, send

press releases, and create a website, all of which none of the artists could not have accomplished on their own. Paige and Littrell (2002) also found that collaborative strategies, like networking among family, friends, and business peers, as well as Internet marketing were strategies utilized by craft retailers. Lovelace (1998) presented the Internet as a place to find a community of artists or craft people with which to network. As the Internet continues to become a more major marketing and commercial arena, small businesses are going to feel pressure to engage in e-commerce. "If a small business has a high percentage of customers and competitors online, then not adopting Internet commerce will be a competitive disadvantage" (Poon & Swatman, 1999, p. 13). Online communities or group sites produced by a group of artists or business owners engaged in a strategic alliance or network could be a less overwhelming step into the online world.

Conclusions. Research on the marketing strategies used by both small businesses and art-related business has been conducted in many ways, including by interviews (Lovelace, 1998; Paige & Littrell, 2002; Wilkinson, 1996), surveys (Clarke & Laherty, 2002; Paige & Littrell, 2002), and case studies (Torres, 2002; Poon & Swatman, 1999). All of these methods pointed to three major themes that can help researchers to better understand the unique marketing challenges presented by small craft and art-related businesses: (1) businesses centered around art or craft have different definitions of success and therefore need different marketing strategies; (2) the Internet may help art-related businesses to implement creative marketing strategies; and, (3) networking or forming strategic alliances may help art and craft business to find greater success in general marketing and on the Internet. Greater research is needed in the narrow field of marketing by independent artists and crafters, and also in the ever-evolving field of art and craft marketing on the Internet. An additional area of research might explore how the personal

goals of artistic expression, creativity, work flexibility, and overall happiness affect the marketing strategies employed by artists and craft persons. Researchers also need to explore the utilization of the vast potential of the Internet for global exposure and creation of community between artists and craft persons.

Theoretical Framework

The online craft community is a growing entity that has the potential to improve the businesses of independent crafters. My study will focus on individuals from this community in order to gather information about how the Internet can be used for marketing and promotion. The results of my research will be helpful in informing the broader art and craft community about Internet marketing strategies. However, before beginning the fieldwork section of my research, a further review of literature will be needed in the areas of small business Internet commerce, commercial fine art Internet marketing done by businesses such as galleries and dealers, and traditional (off-line) craft business strategies. That literature review will be the foundation for my fieldwork exploring the resources and strategies that independent crafters use to market their work online. Some of the areas that will be explored during the field work phase of my research are: how the Internet helps artists gain personal satisfaction from their work, how it helps artists make a living off of their craft, and how the online craft community supports each other with innovative resources and promotional tools. (See Appendix A for a diagram of my conceptual framework.)

Research Methodology

Purpose Statement

The purpose of my study is to fill the gap in research about the Internet marketing strategies of the niche group of independent crafters. I will also synthesize the information I gather in order to make suggestions for how artists and crafters can successfully use the Internet to grow their businesses.

Methodological Paradigm

As the basis of my research, I will employ a combination of the interpretive and critical social science methodological paradigms. Neuman (2003) defined critical social science as "an approach to social science that goes beyond surface illusions to reveal underlying structures and conflicts of social relations as a way to empower people to improve their social world" (p. 532), and interpretive social science as "an approach to social science that focuses on achieving an understanding of how people create and maintain their social worlds" (p.537). I aim to observe, understand, and describe the phenomenon of Internet marketing within the targeted community of independent artists and craft persons. In addition, I want to help artists by researching ways in which the Internet can improve their businesses, and by giving them suggestions of Internet marketing strategies to implement based on this research.

Role of the Researcher

As an artist, I am a member of the group that I am setting out to study. This connection shapes how my research will be conducted. Interaction and dialogue with

other artists will greatly inform and influence my research. My hypothesis is that the Internet can be a democratizing tool for artists because it provides easy and inexpensive access to information and a vibrant marketplace. There is a thriving community of independent crafters using the Internet to network with other artists and market their work. Within this online community, there are many online resources that independent crafters can utilize to promote and market their businesses. In my research I will explore these resources by reviewing literature and observing and collecting information from crafters who already use the Internet successfully. The final result of my research will be a project, in the form of a handbook or website, which will aim to help artists and craft persons by making suggestions, based on the research, for how to use the Internet effectively to start or grow a craft business.

Research Questions

Main question. In what ways can independent crafters use the Internet to market and promote their businesses?

Sub-questions.

- How have artists and crafters marketed and promoted their work in the past?
- How have small and arts-related businesses used the Internet for marketing?
- How is the Internet shaping the marketing practices of artists and crafters?
- What are the most effective and successful methods for using the Internet for marketing crafts?
- Are there certain Internet marketing strategies used by other industries that crafters could adopt?

Definitions

In this study I will be observing a targeted group of crafters who align themselves with the indie craft movement. This specific group is made up of a "hip" new generation of crafters and artists who express their individuality through unique and expressive creation. The term "indie" stands for independent, and reflects similar trends such as indie music and independent film. The Independent Design and Craft Association (2006) defines indie as any business or designer that is not associated with a large company. This segment of the crafting community can be described in many ways, such as renegade, punk, or next generation crafters. Within the context of my research I have decided to label the group as indie. Craft people studied during the course of my research who are a part of this indie community will be called crafters.

Delimitations

In his book, *Research Design*, John W. Creswell (2003) defined delimitations as parameters that narrow the scope of a study (p.147-148). This study will confine itself to studying only related marketing literature and literature about the indie craft community. Also, only artists and crafters whom the researcher considers to be members of this community will be asked to participate in the survey portion of the research. The aim is to collect information from this group of crafters about Internet marketing strategies that other emerging crafters (or crafters who are new to Internet usage) can learn from and consider within their own business plans. The number of people administered surveys during the course of the study will be limited to forty. The study will be further limited by its timeframe. I will begin the research in February of 2007 and conclude in May of 2007. (See Appendix B for a diagram of the data collection schematic and timeline.) My

conclusions will not aim to definitively identify the *most* successful marketing techniques, but only to describe a selection of marketing techniques that are currently being used successfully by independent artists within a certain online community.

Limitations

Creswell (2003) defined limitations as parameters that identify potential weaknesses of a study (p.148). Because this study is limited to the Internet marketing strategies of the small community of indie crafters, it will not be generalizable to other areas of internet marketing or other forms of arts marketing. Similarly, the conclusions found through this study may not apply to everyone within the targeted community. Also, because half of the participants in the survey portion of the research will be recruited from the Internet, the researcher will have no control over exactly how many participants will respond during the time frame of the study. As the field of Internet marketing is continually changing as the technology advances, further research on this topic will always be relevant.

Research Design

Research Approach

My research will be exploratory in nature, aiming to gather and synthesize information related to marketing crafts on the Internet. It will address past and current ways in which artists and crafters have marketed their work, and how arts-related small business have used the Internet for marketing. The historic methods crafters used to market their work will inform how the Internet can fit into the business plans of contemporary crafters. Research into the use of the Internet by other small or arts-related businesses will give ideas for how the targeted group of crafters can also use the Internet to grow their

businesses. Case studies in the form of observations of crafters and artists who are currently using the Internet will show the positive and negative aspects of its potential as a marketing and promotion tool. I will observe the online web presence of crafters who already use the Internet and I will distribute surveys to crafters via the Internet and in person at a craft fair. Research from all of these areas will lead to conclusions about how the Internet is shaping the marketing and promotion strategies employed by independent crafters, and also lead to suggestions for ways in which they can use the Internet to improve their businesses.

Strategy of Inquiry

My preliminary research phase will include reviewing literature related to the historic ways crafters have marketed their work. I will also read current literature about general Internet marketing and arts-related business strategies. Research on the marketing strategies used by both small businesses and art-related business has been conducted in many ways, including by interviews (Lovelace, 1998; Paige & Littrell, 2002; Wilkinson, 1996), surveys (Clarke & Laherty, 2002; Paige & Littrell, 2002), and case studies (Poon & Swatman, 1999). My second phase of research will be based around these predominantly qualitative types of field research. I will do case studies of several contemporary crafters who are currently using the Internet to market or promote their work by observing their online business operations. The crafters I study during the case studies will be chosen through theoretical sampling, which means that cases will be selected based on the new insights they may provide (Neuman, 2003, p. 215). I will use the information collected from the literature and the case studies to create a survey.

Many methods can help researchers better understand the unique marketing challenges presented by small craft and art-related businesses, but surveys are an

especially efficient way to gather both quantitative and qualitative data from many respondents (Neuman, 2003, p. 267). Creating a clear and efficient survey is a major part of gathering successful survey data. Nueman (2003) recommended that researchers avoid using slang, ambiguity, and emotional language when creating survey questions, and to keep questions simple and avoid leading respondents toward certain answers (p. 268-282). The survey used in this study will be self-administered, meaning that the respondents will fill out the survey on their own. Self-administered surveys are a popular research method and were used by both Clarke and Flaherty (2002) and Paige and Littrell (2002) while researching arts and craft marketing. Bourque and Fielder (2003) described the many advantages to these types of surveys: low cost, wider coverage, larger samples, easier implementation, more concise timing, and confidentiality which allows researchers to address more sensitive topics (p. 9-15). Self-administered surveys also have disadvantages, such as low response rates, the inability to account for illiteracy and language differences among respondents, order effect issues, and if the survey is mailed, lack of control over who responds and slower turn-around time as compared to other types of surveys (Bourque & Fielder, p. 15-24). Despite disadvantages many researchers still widely use self-administered surveys to gather both quantitative and qualitative data.

The results from the preliminary literature research and collective case study, as well as the results from the qualitative survey will inform my conclusions about how the Internet is shaping the marketing and promotional strategies of artists and crafters. I also hope the research will reveal suggestions on how crafters can use the Internet to help grow and promote their craft businesses.

Overview of Research Design

I plan to distribute the survey to two convenience groups: crafters currently using the Internet as a major form of marketing, and crafters using craft fairs as a major form of marketing, specifically the Portland, Oregon, Crafty Wonderland. Crafty Wonderland is a craft show and sale that happens on the second Sunday of every month in Portland. Over forty independent artists and crafters are represented at the fair. I aim to attend the March 11, 2006, fair to distribute a survey to willing artists and crafters. I will also invite artists I find to be using the Internet to market their work to take my survey online. Both versions of the survey will contain the same questions; only the format will differ. The researcher will aim to distribute the survey to twenty willing adult participants from each group. (See Appendix C-1 and C-2 for the face-to-face and Internet versions of the survey.)

This study will be conducted between February and May of 2007. The continued review of related literature and the case studies will be conducted during the months of February and March 2007. The online survey will be administered during the month of March, and the face-to-face survey will be administered at Crafty Wonderland in Portland, Oregon, on March 11, 2007. The researcher will analyze and draw conclusions from the collected data during the months of April and May, and a final report of the findings will be produced in May of 2007. (See Appendix B for a detailed timeline and diagram of how my research will progress.)

Anticipated Ethical Issues

This study will not be confidential, therefore respondents may perceive a level of risk in making their views public. This risk will be minimized by clearly informing the

respondents of the non-confidential nature of the study and their right to not participate or to stop participating at any time.

Expectations and Benefits

The aim of the study is to collect information from the niche group of independent crafters about Internet marketing strategies, and to synthesize this information in the form of a handbook that emerging crafters (or crafters new to Internet usage) can learn from in order to improve their businesses. The indie craft community (including the participants of my study) and the broader public will benefit from the existence of this handbook as a centralized source of information about promoting an art or craft business online. The Arts and Administration program at the University of Oregon will benefit from the study because it will further the field and fill a gap in research concerning Internet marketing by artists and crafters.

Data Collection and Analysis

Overview

After reviewing literature related to the topic of Internet marketing strategies for independent artists and crafters, I will conduct case studies of several contemporary crafters who are currently using the Internet to market or promote their work by observing their online business operations. As stated in the above Research Design section, after completing the case studies I will distribute a survey (see Appendix C-1 and C-2) to two convenience groups: crafters currently using the Internet as a major form of marketing, and crafters using craft fairs as a major form of marketing, specifically the Portland, Oregon, Crafty Wonderland. Both versions of the survey will contain the same questions; only the

format will differ. I plan to collect surveys from twenty adult individuals in each group. (See Appendix B to see how the timeline of my research plan will unfold.)

Data Collection Instruments

The survey will ask questions about the artistic activity and Internet activity of the respondents, and the marketing strategies they use. The survey will be self-administered, either on paper or over the Internet. The survey consists of eleven questions, and it will take the respondents approximately twenty minutes to complete. Only adult participants will be recruited. (See Appendix C-1 and C-2 for the face-to-face and Internet versions of the survey.)

Recruitment Intruments

Each respondent will be given a recruitment email or letter (see Appendix D-1 and D-2), which will explain the study and their role as a participant, as well as give them contact information in case they have additional questions. During the face-to-face survey recruitment the recruitment letter may be read as a script. The letter and/or email will inform the participants that their participation is completely voluntary and that the study is not confidential. The recruitment letter and/or email will also indicate that the survey will take the participant approximately twenty minutes to complete, and that they can withdraw from participation at any time. Participants will be given a copy of the recruitment letter or be asked to print a copy of the email for their records.

Consent Forms

Face-to-face survey consent. When the survey is administered at the Crafty Wonderland craft show recruitment will take place in person. Each potential participant will be handed the recruitment letter (see Appendix D-1) or be read the letter in the form of a script. In either case, a copy of the letter will be presented to the participant to keep for their records. When participants verbally give their consent to participate, they will be given the paper survey (see Appendix C-1). Participants will complete the survey and then fill out a final consent form at the end of the survey with their contact information and signature. They can withdraw from participation in the study at any time. Returning the survey to the researcher with their complete contact information and signature will indicate their consent to being a part of the study.

Internet survey consent. When the survey is administered through the use of the Internet recruitment will take place in the form of an email (see Appendix D-2). By clicking a link within the email, the potential participant will be taken to the consent screen (see Appendix E). The consent screen will re-iterate information about the study and their role as participant. It will have a form for the participant to fill out with their contact information. The participant will be informed that by filling out this information and clicking the submit button they will be indicating their consent to be a part of the study. After indicating their consent by clicking the consent button, the participant will be taken to the online survey. Consent will be re-enforced at the end of the online survey when the participant clicks the survey submit button (see Appendix C-2).

Data Collection and Disposition Procedures

The hard copies and digital copies of the survey responses will be kept for further analysis and reporting. Hard copies of the survey will be kept in a file at the researcher's home, and the digital records of the online survey will be kept on the hard drive of the researcher's personal computer. The participants will be informed of this fact in the recruitment letter and email (see Appendix D-1 and D-2).

Coding and Data Analysis

The collected data will be come from three different sets: related literature, case studies, and survey results. After the data is collected, it will be synthesized and interpreted based on common responses and trends. Suggestions of successful Internet marketing strategies will be extracted. Because none of the data are anonymous, no special coding will have to be done to ensure anonymity.

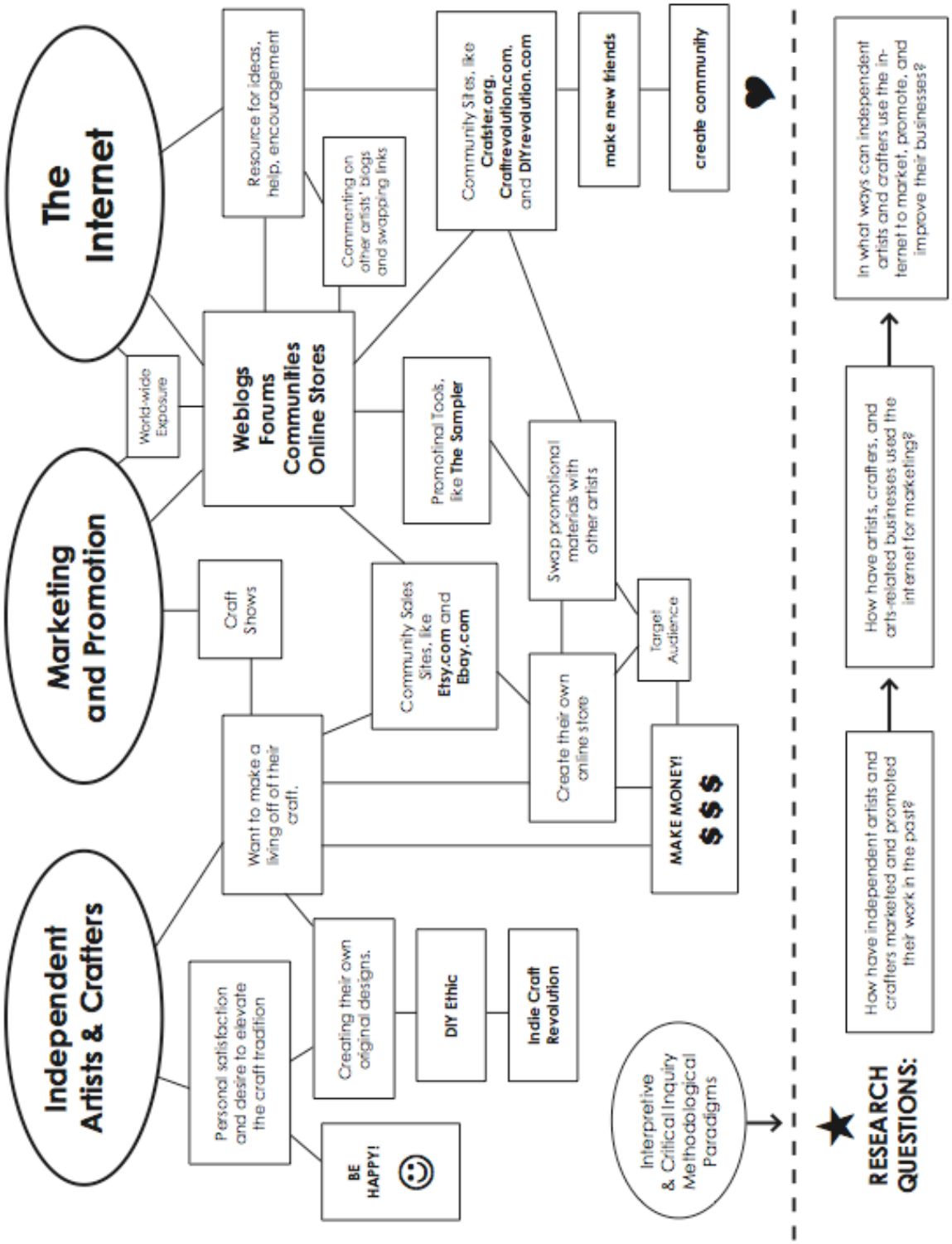
Validation of Findings

Validity of the study will be demonstrated in multiple ways. Triangulation will occur by the use of three different data sets: related literature, case studies, and survey results. The literature review will be used to set up the framework of the study, and the two additional data sets will be compared within this framework. The complete data collection procedure will be documented in order to ensure repeatability. And, the researcher will use rich, thick descriptions when conveying the findings in order to create a clear understanding of the study.

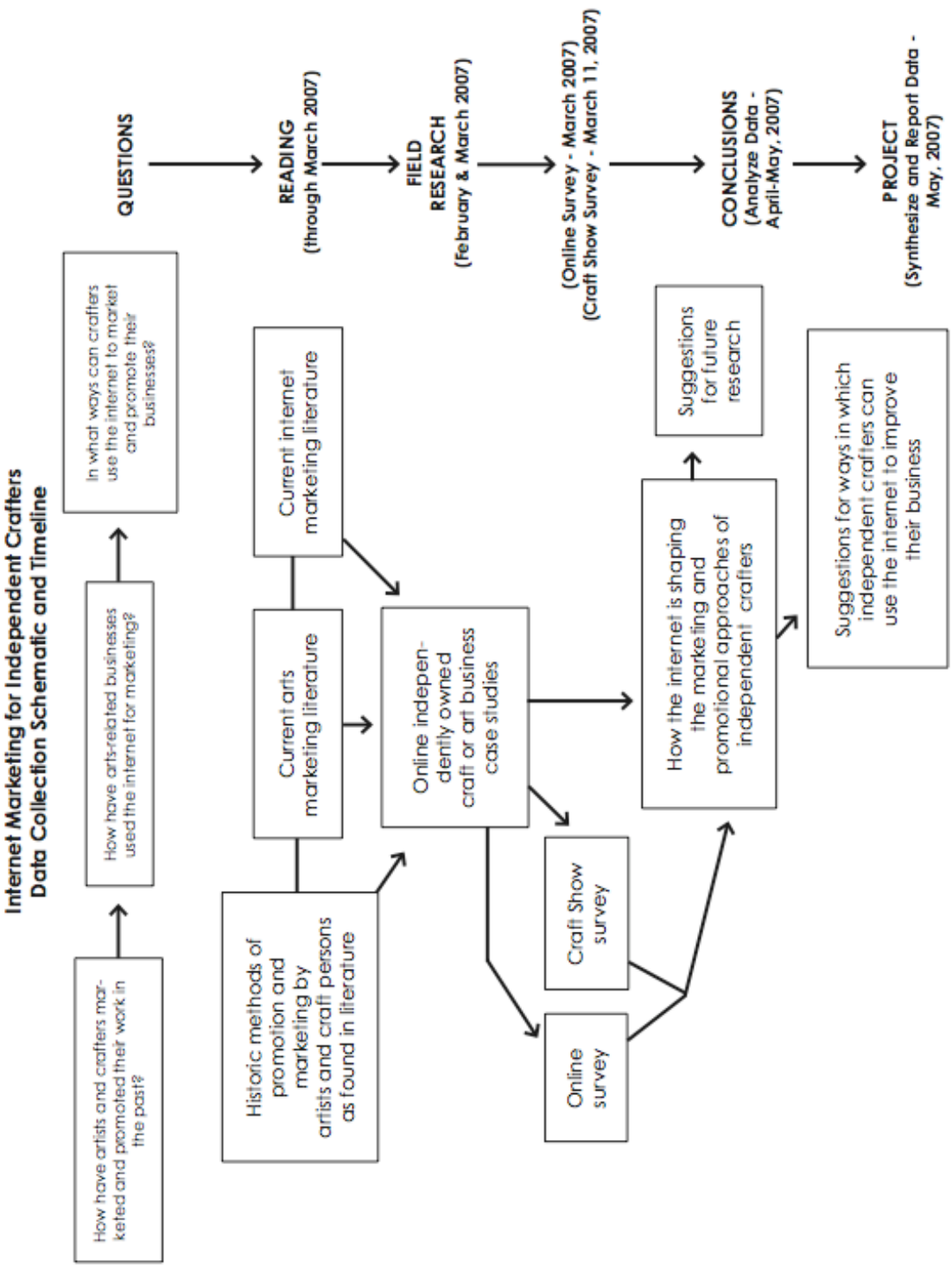
Details Regarding Project

The research study described in this proposal is to be completed by the researcher as a partial fulfillment of the Arts and Administration master's degree requirements at the University of Oregon. The Arts and Administration Department will benefit from the study because it will further the field and fill a gap in research concerning Internet marketing by artists and crafters. The research description and findings will be presented in a final research paper and also in the form of a project. The final project will include a handbook synthesizing the research into suggestions for how crafters can successfully use the Internet to grow their businesses. Additionally, the handbook may lead to the development of a website resource to be worked on after graduation as part of my professional development plans.

Appendix A


The Internet
Marketing and Promotion
Independent Artists & Crafters
Resource for ideas, help, encouragement
Commenting on other artists' blogs and swapping links
Community Sites, like Craftster.org, Craftrevolution.com, and DIYrevolution.com
make new friends
create community
World-wide Exposure
Weblogs Forums Communities Online Stores
Promotional Tools, like The Sampler
Swap promotional materials with other artists
Craft Shows
Community Sales Sites, like Etsy.com and Ebay.com
Target Audience
Want to make a living off of their craft.
Create their own online store
MAKE MONEY!
$ $ $
Personal satisfaction and desire to elevate the craft tradition
Creating their own original designs.
DIY Ethic
Indie Craft Revolution
BE HAPPY!
Interpretive & Critical Inquiry Methodological Paradigms
RESEARCH QUESTIONS:
How have independent artists and crafters marketed and promoted their work in the past?
How have artists, crafters, and arts-related businesses used the internet for marketing?
In what ways can independent artists and crafters use the internet to market, promote, and improve their businesses?

Appendix B


Internet Marketing for Independent Crafters
Data Collection Schematic and Timeline
QUESTIONS
READING
(through March 2007)
FIELD
RESEARCH
(February & March 2007)
(Online Survey - March 2007)
(Craft Show Survey - March 11, 2007)
CONCLUSIONS
(Analyze Data -
April-May, 2007)
PROJECT
(Synthesize and Report Data -
May, 2007)
How have artists and crafters marketed and promoted their work in the past?
How have arts-related businesses used the internet for marketing?
In what ways can crafters use the internet to market and promote their businesses?
Historic methods of promotion and marketing by artists and craft persons as found in literature
Current arts marketing literature
Current internet marketing literature
Online independently owned craft or art business case studies
Online survey
Craft Show survey
How the internet is shaping the marketing and promotional approaches of independent crafters
Suggestions for future research
Suggestions for ways in which independent crafters can use the internet to improve their business

Appendix C-1: Face-to-Face Survey

CRAFTERS SURVEY
Internet Marketing Strategies for Indie Crafters
Rachel Johnson, Principal Investigator
University of Oregon Arts and Administration Program

Thank you for taking time to participate in my research study. Please feel free to answer all or any of the following questions, and note that your participation is voluntary.

1.) What role does your artwork or crafts play in your life? (mark one)

- ☐ I only make crafts as a hobby.
- ☐ My crafts are a major interest of mine and I spend a lot of my free time on it.
- ☐ Making crafts is not my full time job right now, but I am working hard to make it my livelihood.
- ☐ Making my crafts is my full time job or my main source of income.
- ☐ Other. Please explain:_____

1-B.) If you answered above that making crafts is your full time job, or you would like it to be, what is your goal income level?

- ☐ under $15,000
- ☐ $15,001 - $25,000
- ☐ $25,001 - $40,000
- ☐ $40,001 - $60,000
- ☐ over $60,000

2.) What type of artwork or crafts do you sell or market on the Internet? (mark all that apply)

- ☐ fine art paintings, illustrations, photographs, or drawings
- ☐ plushies or other stuffed objects
- ☐ functional hand-sewn products, such as bags or pouches
- ☐ clothing
- ☐ needlecrafts or quilts
- ☐ jewelry or accessories
- ☐ paper products
- ☐ books or zines
- ☐ pottery, ceramics or glass items
- ☐ sculptures or trinkets
- ☐ beauty or bath items
- ☐ housewares
- ☐ other. Please specify: _____

3.) As a crafter, how do you use the Internet? (mark all that apply)

- ☐ I visit online craft communities.
- ☐ I read and post to forums regarding art or crafts.
- ☐ I run a blog or online journal.
- ☐ I read other artists' or crafters' blogs.
- ☐ I participate in swaps.
- ☐ I sell my crafts or artwork on a community store like etsy.com.
- ☐ I sell my crafts or artwork on my own personal online shop.
- ☐ Other. Please explain: _____

4.) How many hours per week do you spend online <u>working on your craft business</u>? (mark one)

- ☐ 0-5 hours

- ☐ 6-10 hours
- ☐ 11-20 hours
- ☐ 21-40 hours
- ☐ 40+ hours

5.) To what extent have you been inspired by other artists or crafters on the Internet? (mark one)

- ☐ A lot! I am inspired everyday! There are so many great ideas and artists to see on the Internet.
- ☐ Somewhat. I have gotten some good ideas from other artists or crafters on the Internet.
- ☐ Not much. I like seeing the work of other artists and crafters, but I pretty much do my own thing.
- ☐ Other. Please explain: _____

6.) Why did you first decide to start using the Internet to market and sell your crafts? (mark all that apply)

- ☐ Not applicable. I don't sell or market my work online.
- ☐ It was easy.
- ☐ It was fun.
- ☐ It was less expensive than other forms of marketing.
- ☐ To reach a broader audience.
- ☐ To reach a more targeted audience.
- ☐ Because I felt that every business, including my own, should have a web presence.
- ☐ Other. Please explain: _____

7-A.) What techniques do you use to recruit new customers? (mark all that apply)

- ☐ Paid advertising on the Internet.
- ☐ Advertisement swaps with other artist and crafters on the Internet.
- ☐ Print advertisements.
- ☐ Post or comment on other people's blogs and forums with links to my website.
- ☐ Created a MySpace profile, and/or profiles on other similar social networking websites.
- ☐ Participate in The Sampler, or other similar snail mail marketing campaigns that include sending Samples of products to interested consumers.
- ☐ Traditional word of mouth.
- ☐ Attend craft shows as a vendor to sell and promote my art or crafts.
- ☐ Other. Please explain: _____
- ☐ Not applicable. I don't try to attract customers.

7-B.) Of the techniques you marked above as ways in which you recruit new customers, which one do you feel is the most successful? _____

8-A.) What techniques do you use to retain customers? (mark all that apply)

- ☐ I keep a blog with updates about my store or my art or crafts.
- ☐ I send out an email newsletter to my customers.
- ☐ I send out snail mail promotions to my customers.
- ☐ I email my customers personal messages.
- ☐ I send personal notes or special treats in all of my packages.
- ☐ I offer special promotional deals at my online store periodically.
- ☐ Other. Please explain: _____
- ☐ Not applicable. I don't use any specific technique to retain customers.

8-B.) Of the techniques you marked above as ways in which you retain customers, which one do you feel is the most successful? _____

9.) To what extent has using the Internet helped you to market and sell your crafts? (mark one)

- ☐ Not applicable. I don't sell my work online.
- ☐ A lot! I have acquired many customers (and friends) through the Internet.
- ☐ Somewhat. I feel I have reached a great audience, but I market my work in a lot of other ways, too.
- ☐ Not much. I have had better success with other areas of marketing, such as craft shows.
- ☐ Other. Please explain: _____

10.) In what other ways has the Internet helped you with your crafts?

11.) Do you have any suggestions or tips for artists or crafters who would like to start using the Internet to market their work and create a business?

Your signature and the inclusion of your contact information on this form indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above and in the recruitment letter, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you received a copy of the recruitment letter, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies. You have been given a copy of the recruitment letter to keep which contains information about the study, as well as contact information.

Print Name:_____

Email:_____

Website:_____

Signature:_____ Date:_____

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Appendix C-2: Internet Survey

CRAFTERS SURVEY

Internet Marketing Strategies for Indie Crafters

Rachel Johnson, Principal Investigator
University of Oregon Arts and Administration Program

Thank you for taking time to participate in my research study. Please feel free to answer all or any of the following questions, and note that your participation is voluntary.

1.) What role does your artwork or crafts play in your life? (mark one)

- ☐ I only make crafts as a hobby.
- ☐ My crafts are a major interest of mine and I spend a lot of my free time on it.
- ☐ Making crafts is not my full time job right now, but I am working hard to make it my livelihood.
- ☐ Making my crafts is my full time job or my main source of income.
- ☐ Other. Please explain:_____

1-B.) If you answered above that making crafts is your full time job, or you would like it to be, what is your goal income level?

- ☐ under $15,000
- ☐ $15,001 - $25,000
- ☐ $25,001 - $40,000
- ☐ $40,001 - $60,000
- ☐ over $60,000

2.) What type of artwork or crafts do you sell or market on the Internet? (mark all that apply)

- ☐ fine art paintings, illustrations, photographs, or drawings
- ☐ plushies or other stuffed objects
- ☐ functional hand-sewn products, such as bags or pouches
- ☐ clothing
- ☐ needlecrafts or quilts
- ☐ jewelry or accessories
- ☐ paper products
- ☐ books or zines
- ☐ pottery, ceramics or glass items
- ☐ sculptures or trinkets
- ☐ beauty or bath items
- ☐ housewares
- ☐ other. Please specify: _____

3.) As a crafter, how do you use the Internet? (mark all that apply)

- ☐ I visit online craft communities.
- ☐ I read and post to forums regarding art or crafts.
- ☐ I run a blog or online journal.
- ☐ I read other artists' or crafters' blogs.
- ☐ I participate in swaps.
- ☐ I sell my crafts or artwork on a community store like etsy.com.
- ☐ I sell my crafts or artwork on my own personal online shop.
- ☐ Other. Please explain: _____

4.) How many hours per week do you spend online working on your craft business? (mark one)

- ☐ 0-5 hours
- ☐ 6-10 hours
- ☐ 11-20 hours
- ☐ 21-40 hours
- ☐ 40+ hours

5.) To what extent have you been inspired by other artists or crafters on the Internet? (mark one)

- ☐ A lot! I am inspired everyday! There are so many great ideas and artists to see on the Internet.
- ☐ Somewhat. I have gotten some good ideas from other artists or crafters on the Internet.
- ☐ Not much. I like seeing the work of other artists and crafters, but I pretty much do my own thing.
- ☐ Other. Please explain: _____

6.) Why did you first decide to start using the Internet to market and sell your crafts? (mark all that apply)

- ☐ Not applicable. I don't sell or market my work online.
- ☐ It was easy.
- ☐ It was fun.
- ☐ It was less expensive than other forms of marketing.
- ☐ To reach a broader audience.
- ☐ To reach a more targeted audience.
- ☐ Because I felt that every business, including my own, should have a web presence.
- ☐ Other. Please explain: _____

7-A.) What techniques do you use to recruit new customers? (mark all that apply)

- ☐ Paid advertising on the Internet.
- ☐ Advertisement swaps with other artist and crafters on the Internet.
- ☐ Print advertisements.
- ☐ Post or comment on other people's blogs and forums with links to my website.
- ☐ Created a MySpace profile, and/or profiles on other similar social networking websites.
- ☐ Participate in The Sampler, or other similar snail mail marketing campaigns that include sending Samples of products to interested consumers.
- ☐ Traditional word of mouth.
- ☐ Attend craft shows as a vendor to sell and promote my art or crafts.
- ☐ Other. Please explain: _____
- ☐ Not applicable. I don't try to attract customers.

7-B.) Of the techniques you marked above as ways in which you recruit new customers, which one do you feel is the most successful? _____

8-A.) What techniques do you use to retain customers? (mark all that apply)

- ☐ I keep a blog with updates about my store or my art or crafts.
- ☐ I send out an email newsletter to my customers.
- ☐ I send out snail mail promotions to my customers.
- ☐ I email my customers personal messages.
- ☐ I send personal notes or special treats in all of my packages.
- ☐ I offer special promotional deals at my online store periodically.
- ☐ Other. Please explain: _____
- ☐ Not applicable. I don't use any specific technique to retain customers.

8-B.) Of the techniques you marked above as ways in which you retain customers, which one do you feel is the most successful? _____

9.) To what extent has using the Internet helped you to market and sell your crafts? (mark one)

- ☐ Not applicable. I don't sell my work online.
- ☐ A lot! I have acquired many customers (and friends) through the Internet.
- ☐ Somewhat. I feel I have reached a great audience, but I market my work in a lot of other ways, too.
- ☐ Not much. I have had better success with other areas of marketing, such as craft shows.
- ☐ Other. Please explain: _____

10.) In what other ways has the Internet helped you with your crafts?

11.) Do you have any suggestions or tips for artists or crafters who would like to start using the Internet to market their work and create a business?

By clicking the SUBMIT button you are indicating that you have read and understand the information provided on the previous screen and in the recruitment email, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you received a copy of the recruitment email, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies. You have been advised to print a copy of the recruitment email, which contains information about the study as well as contact information, to keep for your records.

Thank you for your participation in this study.

SUBMIT

Appendix D-1: Face-to-face Recruitment Letter and/or Script

Internet Marketing Strategies for Indie Crafters

Rachel Johnson, Principal Investigator
University of Oregon Arts and Administration Program

Dear crafter,

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Rachel Johnson, from the University of Oregon Arts and Administration department. This research study is a partial requirement for the Arts and Administration master's degree program. I hope to learn how crafters can use the Internet to market and promote their businesses. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a member of the independent crafting community. You must be over eighteen to participate.

If you decide to participate, you will be given a survey that contains eleven questions. The survey will take approximately twenty minutes to complete. There is no cost to participate, but the study is not confidential and your contact information is requested. The aim of the study is to collect information from the niche group of independent crafters about Internet marketing strategies, and to synthesize this information in the form of a handbook that emerging artists (or artists new to Internet usage) can learn from in order to improve their businesses. The indie craft community and the broader public will benefit from the existence of this handbook as a centralized source of information about promoting an art or craft business online. However, I cannot guarantee that you personally will receive any benefits from this research.

This study is not confidential, but your contact information will never be released to any third party. The data collected from these surveys will be kept indefinitely for future analysis and reporting by the researcher.

Your participation is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with the University of Oregon and the Arts and Administration program. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, Rachel Johnson, at 541-579-0660 or rachel@rljart.com, or my advisor, Dr. Doug Blandy, at dblandy@uoregon.edu If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the Office for Protection of Human Subjects, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510. You have been given a copy of this letter to keep.

Your signature and the inclusion of your contact information on the survey indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you have received a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

Thank you for your participation in this study,

Sincerely,

Rachel Johnson
rachel@rljart.com

Appendix D-2: Internet Recruitment Email

Internet Marketing Strategies for Indie Crafters
Rachel Johnson, Principal Investigator
University of Oregon Arts and Administration Program

From: rachel@rljart.com
Subject: You are invited to participate in a University of Oregon research study
Date:
To:

Email Body:

Dear crafter,

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Rachel Johnson, from the University of Oregon Arts and Administration department. This research study is a partial requirement for the Arts and Administration master's degree program. I hope to learn how artists and crafters can use the Internet to market and promote their businesses. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a member of the independent crafting community. You must be over eighteen to participate.

If you decide to participate, you will click a link at the bottom of this page, which will take you to the online survey. The survey contains eleven questions and will take approximately twenty minutes to complete. There is no cost to participate, but the study is not confidential and your contact information is requested. The aim of the study is to collect information from the niche group of independent crafters about Internet marketing strategies, and to synthesize this information in the form of a handbook that emerging artists (or artists new to Internet usage) can learn from in order to improve their businesses. The indie craft community and the broader public will benefit from the existence of this handbook as a centralized source of information about promoting an art or craft business online. However, I cannot guarantee that you personally will receive any benefits from this research.

This study is not confidential, but your contact information will never be released to any third party. The data collected from these surveys will be kept indefinitely for future analysis and reporting by the researcher.

Your participation is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with the University of Oregon and the Arts and Administration program. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, Rachel Johnson, at 541-579-0660 or rachel@rljart.com, or my advisor, Dr. Doug Blandy, at dblandy@uoregon.edu If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the Office for Protection of Human Subjects, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510. Please print a copy of this email for your records.

If you agree to participate in this study and you click on the link below, you will be taken to the online survey consent form. By submitting the completed consent form with your contact information you indicate that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you have printed a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies. After submitting the completed online consent form you will be taken to the online survey.

Click Here to participate in this study.

Thank you for your participation in this study,

Sincerely,

Rachel Johnson
rachel@rljart.com

Appendix E: Internet Survey Consent Form

Internet Marketing Strategies for Indie Crafters

Rachel Johnson, Principal Investigator
University of Oregon Arts and Administration Program

Thank you for deciding to participate in my research study about the Internet marketing strategies of independent crafters. The aim of the study is to collect information from the niche group of independent crafters about Internet marketing strategies, and to synthesize this information in the form of a handbook that emerging artists (or artists new to Internet usage) can learn from in order to improve their businesses. The indie craft community and the broader public will benefit from the existence of this handbook as a centralized source of information about promoting an art or craft business online. However, I cannot guarantee that you personally will receive any benefits from this research.

By submitting this completed consent form (by clicking the submit button below) with your contact information you indicate that you have read and understand the information provided in the recruitment email, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you have received a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies. After submitting the completed online consent form you will be taken to the online survey. You have been advised to print a copy of the recruitment email, which contains information about the study as well as contact information, to keep for your records.

Print Name:_____

Email:_____

Website:_____

Thank you for your participation in this study.

SUBMIT

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