



Using research to determine product attributes and stratification for the design and marketing of user authentication.

[Introduction]

By Mark Schraad

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User Authentication Product Development

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and stratification for the design and marketing of
user authentication.**

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Abstract

This paper explores needs and wants in the form of attribute sets for user authentication product offerings for use in securing data access as well as information and Internet access control. Seeking to determine optimal attribute for products that match market segment demands is a critical step in the design function. Research has been conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methods to accomplish a comprehensive view of the user, the marketplace and product attribute demand. This research exposes a clear hierarchy of needs as well as some indicators of the level of awareness of the problem that these products attempt to resolve. There is sufficient demand in the marketplace, but the development and design priorities must be set based upon innovation diffusion, potential returns and available resource allocation.

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In the Spring of 2003 I walked out of a prosperous relationship, ownership in a successful and profitable design firm that I had co-founded. It was a radical and some thought foolish move. But my belief that was that it was not too late in life, to add to my education and redirect my professional career, gave me the strength to be decisive. I have invested heavily in a new breadth of knowledge and capabilities that by some notions could be seen as very selfish. A lot of people close to me have made sacrifices so that this could happen, and I would like to thank them.

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For a fruitful future, a company cannot think in terms of singular offerings. As the movement up the product acceptance curve progresses, equilibrium on the supply/demand curve is realized. Often seen as an early indicator of maturity in the marketplace, it is also an early warning for market leaders. Complacency will likely put them in jeopardy of competitive threats. Disruptive technologies, the lowering of barriers to entry, powers of suppliers and distributors will all contribute to a more treacherous market as maturity sets in.

As diffusion progresses and the consumer gains knowledge of available offerings fragmentation in the marketplace increases. This fragmentation is a more powerful force. Such conditions will compel the astute product manager to explore options. These options will include expansion of product offering along the value chain. They should include the grouping of attributes as matched to more exacting target market segments. They should consider offerings of newly grouped attribute sets targeted to previously underserved markets.

While market research can help us determine the “what” of customer needs in the marketplace, it rarely explores the “why” sufficiently. The use of market research technologies, and some from outside the domain of market research offer us, as designers, the possibility to delve deeper, garnering richer information and more productive insight. Sometimes it is not enough to know what, but to also know the why and how.

This project explores the use of some traditional market research technologies and some anthropological practices in an effort to uncover information and gain insight into how better to stratify offerings and the attributes of those offerings. This information can help us build a strategy for maximizing the potential of these offerings to specifically targeted segments, at the appropriate stage of diffusion (market acceptance).

This is a component of research done in part as a thesis project in graduate school and initiated during my role as Vice President of Marketing. It is highly topical to Griffin Technologies without which this project would not have been necessary or possible. My thanks to all of those individuals for their help and support.

Tables, figures and some of the conclusionary content have been omitted from the versions published on the web site. Some of that content is available by request.

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