

Short Paper Instructions

IDSC 6050

Instructions:

Write an article on the following topic:

“The role of cultural adaptation in developing IT solutions for new markets”

Description:

The Internet holds the promise of being a great leveler in the global economy. As the world gets more interconnected, many companies are seeking to use the Internet to reach more markets. But the conventional way of simply changing their online portal to a different language or partnering with a few local companies isn't always the best strategy. This is because although the Internet allows to tap into new markets and demographics (either in the developed or developing countries), these markets often have their own infrastructural limitations (e.g., low broadband penetration, low speed), unexpected alternatives (e.g., high mobile phone adoption in Asia and Africa), different needs and expectations of customers, and unique opportunities to create innovative IT based services.

Many startups around the world are adapting or “culturalizing” established IT products and business models for their local markets with amazing results. Some examples discussed in the class are Ushahidi, Tesco Homeplus, etc. Other relevant examples are ZipDial, Jumia, mPawa, m-Pesa, Eko, DealDey, iRoko, FlipKart, InterviewStreet, Redbus, AliPay Wallet, etc.

Identifying these market trends, innovation opportunities, and adaptation strategies, as well as understanding how to grow an IT-based business in these unsaturated and rising economies are critical qualities needed by companies as they try to compete on a global scale. The goal of this assignment is therefore to help you to develop an appreciation for this spirit of innovation and the transformative role of Information Technologies. It will also hopefully provide you with a flavor of research as you explore the Internet and tech journals for relevant materials.

What kind of issues should you try to answer in your article? Here are some example questions to guide your thoughts. Use your creativity to ask and explore interesting questions:

- (a) What motivated the founders/CEOs to develop the IT solution that the company provides (i.e., what was this opportunity for innovation)?
- (b) What hurdles (e.g., infrastructural, political, regulatory) they faced, and how did the chosen IT solution help overcome it?
- (c) Was the idea borrowed and adapted from an existing company (potentially operating in a different market, e.g., Alipay's similarities to PayPal and Google Wallet, or RedBus' to travel sites like Expedia)? If so, how was the “adaptation” done or is it a clone?
- (d) Can some of these adapted ideas be relevant to the original company that inspired the startup idea?
- (e) How did the company refine its IT-based offering over time? What were the market demands they were responding to?

You are free to pick startups/companies in any country or market, including the US, as long as you can identify the role of culturalization in the entity of your choice. Try to pick unique companies that will make your article distinct from others while ensuring that you have enough materials to make a storyline for your article. Do not choose Ushahidi or Tesco Homeplus examples as they were covered in the class. To avoid multiple groups from selecting the same topic, please let the instructor know as soon as you have chosen a company (or in **Week 1**) which company your group would like to write about. In case of conflicts the topic will be awarded on a first-come-first-take basis and the other group(s) may be required to change the selected topic.

You must select a good **title** for your article. Also collect pictures or videos related to your article and keep them ready for their potential use in the mini-project.

Group formation:

Group size for this assignment is 3. You will find the information about your group partners on Moodle. Every groups' short paper should have a section at the end containing a summary of contributions made by each group member.

Evaluation:

- 0-5 points for "presentation" (how clearly the ideas are presented in the paper + paper organization and formatting)
- 0-7 points for "research & sources" (how interesting was the chosen company for the topic, how detailed was the investigation for relevant information on the chosen company, how much of novel information was collected, and were the sources cited properly)
- 0-8 points for "reasoning & creativity" (how detailed is the exploration on the founder's motivation behind the formation of the company/product, how interesting were the questions asked about culturalization phenomenon, how logical and thought-provoking were the answers, how thorough and creative was the investigation regarding the company's/product's offerings and future growth plans)

Max overall score: 20 points.

Due date:

See information on Moodle. The paper is to be uploaded on Moodle using the submission link in Week 0.

Formatting Guidelines:

Preferred format is Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx). Alternative format: Adobe Acrobat (.pdf). If you are not able to submit your paper in one of these formats, please inform the instructor.

Formatting guidelines for the short paper: Please use 11 pt font size, single spacing, and 1-inch margins on all sides of the page. Please format your articles very professionally.

Expected length: Each group should submit a paper of 3 pages in length, excluding references. If you have been able to collect a lot of materials, you are most welcome to submit a paper longer than 3 pages, but please remain within 6 pages (excluding references).

Reference Videos & Articles:

Ushahidi in Africa: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhT3co2qNAA>

Tesco Homeplus in Korea: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGaVFRzTTP4>

Also read the example articles shared on Moodle about Ushahidi and Tesco Homeplus.