

# Support for the social dimension of shopping through Web Based Sales Configurators

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# Introduction

- Social Software Applications (**SSAs**) once connected with a commercial website **provide an interactive and socially rich shopping experience**, more **similar to retail** shopping experiences.
  - A growing number of **MCs** that sell personalized product via Web Based Sales Configurators (WBSCs), **are connecting their WBSCs with SSAs**.
  - However **research** on the use of SSAs by MCs **it's still in its infancy** [Blazek, 2012; Piller, 2012, Piller and Blazek, 2013]. In particular, the **social benefits** that the WBSC users could derive from the connection of WBSCs with SSAs **have not been investigated yet**.
- 
- Research on WBSCs needs to investigate on WBSCc-SSAs connection and social benefits for three reasons:
    1. **Shopping** process **involves** a variety of consumer personal and **social variables and** encompass a wide range of **social interaction** [Ward, 1974]. Currently **e-commerce is** more and more **based on social interaction** on the Net and for this reason the term **social-commerce** has been introduced [Huang and Benyoucef, 2013]
    2. Consumer **social needs** are likely to be **stronger** while shopping for personalized products **using WBSC** [Jeppesen, 2005, Franke et al.2008]
    3. Research has shown that up to **50% of the additional willingness to pay** for configured products can be explained by **positive perception of the co-design** process itself [Franke et al.2010]

# Background

## Social needs in the shopping process

During the shopping process **consumers** feel the **need to interact** with other persons [Teo and Yeong, 2003]. **In particular** consumers **experience two needs**, namely: the need for **social involvement** and the need for **social feedback**.

### Need for social involvement (SI)

It refers to the consumer **need for affiliation** to a group as the individual's preference:

- **to act in accordance with persons that count for him/her** (i.e. relevant others: family, friends, colleagues);
- **to be in contact with persons that count for him/her during the shopping experience** [Bloemer et al. 2003]

### Need for social feedback (SF)

It refers to the consumer **need for feedback from persons that** count for him/her because are external sources of information that **can orientate his/her decision process**. In particular:

- **already known** persons (i.e. relevant others: family, friends, colleagues);
- **highly trustworthy** persons (i.e. experts, company representatives, other customers) [Cheung and Lee, 2006]

# Background

## How SSAs fulfil social needs in the online shopping

### Need for social involvement (SI)

- **SSAs** enables a communication medium to **provide social presence** to its users. Social presence is **a medium quality** to support various forms of interaction similar to the face-to face interactions.
- Thanks to SSAs, online consumer can perceive high social presence because feels **others users** as being **psychologically present** [Hassanein and Head, 2007].
- The perception of **social presence positively influence** consumer intention to **purchase** from a commercial website [Lee et al.2011]

### Need for social feedback (SF)

- **SSAs enables a** communication medium to provide different **channels of real time feedback** to the medium's user [Wang et al. 2012]
- Thanks to SSAs, online consumer can receive **real-time feedback** from highly trustworthy sources (i.e. his relevant others, company representatives, other customers, etc.)
- The real-time feedback **provided by** customer's **highly trustworthy sources plays a key role** when **during the shopping process** he/she hasn't clear idea, has time constraints or perceive high shopping risk [Lueg and Finney, 2007]

# Research framework

Supported stages of the consumer decision process (E.B.M. model)

Information Search

Evaluation of alternatives

Purchase

Post-purchase

Source: Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (1995)

Supported stages of the WBSC user configuration process

Development of initial configuration idea

Preliminary configuration generation

Final configuration evaluation

Source: Franke et al.2008

Social needs fulfilled by WBSC-SSA connection

*Social Involvement (SI)*

*Social Feedback (SF)*

# Research aims and method

## Aim #1

To describe **how** existing **WBSCs connect with SSAs**

## Method

**250** existent WBSCs, (languages: Eng. Ita. Esp., a wide variety of products Twere considered, such as jewellery, T-shirt, cars, bikes, notebooks, etc.).

- **Identification** of the presence of WBSC-SSA connections;
- **Analysis** of the different WBSC-SSA connections modalities.

## Aim #2

To understand **which stages** of the configuration-shopping process **are supported by the different WBSCs-SSAs connections**

## Method

Analytical reasoning of the consumer decision process (E.B.M. model), to:

- **Identify** which stages of the user's decision process (E.B.M. model) are supported by each modality;
- **Identify** which stages of the configuration process are supported by each modality (configuration proc. described in Franke et al 2008)

## Aim #3

To explain **how the different WBSCs-SSAs connections support** fulfilment of the **SI** and **SF** needs.

## Method

Analytical reasoning on how social involvement and social feedback are provided by each WBSCs-SSAs connection modality

# WBSC-SSA connection modalities

## WBSCs-SSAs connection modalities

**M1: Icons in the company website to connect WBSC users to company SM profile(s)**

**M2: Icons in the WBSC to connect WBSC users to their SM profile(s): *variants* M2.1 - M2.2 - M2.3**

**M3: Direct browse/upload from the WBSC of files shared in the personal SM profile(s)**

**M4: Simplified WBSC embedded in company SN profile(s)**

**M5: Weblog (Blog) in the company website to connect WBSC users to relevant others: *variants* M5.1 – M5.2**

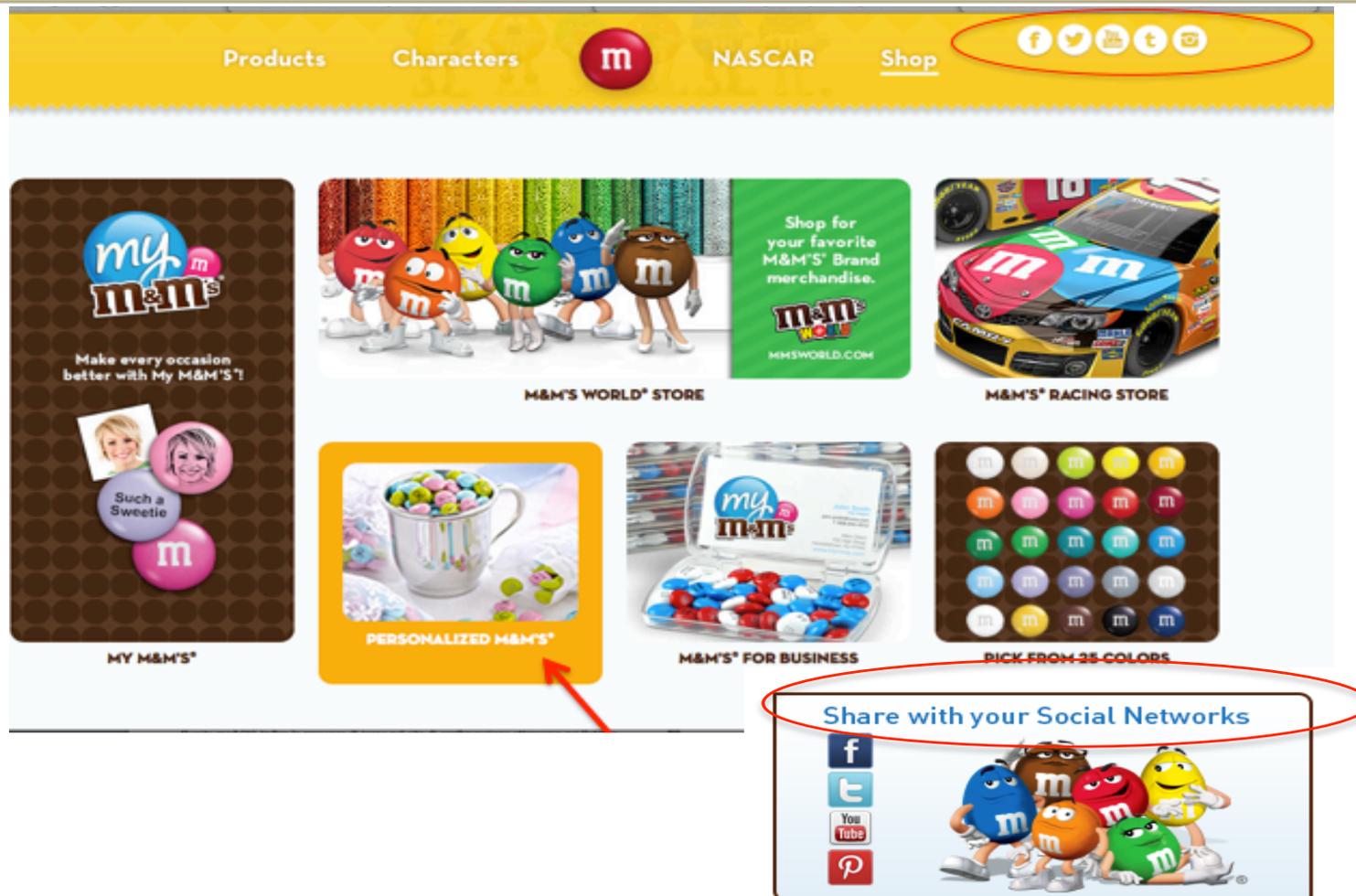
**M6: Company Discussion Forum to connect WBSC users to relevant others**

**M7: E-mail service to connect WBSC users to relevant others: *variants* M7.1 - M7.2**

**M8: Instant message services to connect WBSC users to company customer service**

# M1: Icons in the company website to connect WBSC users to company SM profile(s) (1/3)

SM icons are placed on the company website, external to the WBSC. The WBSC's user can connect to the corresponding company's SM profiles by clicking on the various icons.



# M1: Icons in the company website to connect WBSC users to company SM profile(s) (2/3)

*SM icons are placed on the company website, external to the WBSC. The WBSC's user can connect to the corresponding company's SM profiles by clicking on the various icons.*

The screenshot displays the Facebook profile for M&M's U.S.A. The page header includes the Facebook logo, the name "M&M's U.S.A.", and navigation links like "Home 20+", "Trova amici", and notification icons. The main cover image features a green background with the text "COMING JANUARY 2015!" and a large image of a "CRISPY" M&M's candy bag. Below the cover image is the profile picture of the M&M's characters and the name "M&M's U.S.A." with a verified badge and the category "Cibi/bevande". Social interaction buttons for "Mi piace", "Segui", "Messaggio", and a menu icon are visible.

The left sidebar shows the "PERSONE" section with 10,957,945 "Mi piace" and an invitation to invite friends. Below that is the "INFORMAZIONI" section with a welcome message: "Welcome to the official M&M'S® U.S.A. Page. This is the place on Facebook where you can talk about (and occasionally to) your beloved M&M'S Brand...".

The main content area shows a post from "M&M's U.S.A." dated "Ieri" (yesterday) with the text: "Show us your favorite – and most delicious – M&M'S recipes! – The M&M'S Crew — con Omr ADrian Solis Medina Bo e altre 22 persone." Below the text is a partial view of a photo showing a box of M&M's candies.

The right sidebar contains a "Recenti" list of years from 2014 down to 1980, a "Crea una Pagina" button, and a list of recent activity from other users, including "A Sergi Ventura Bartra" and "A Berta Malet Roig". At the bottom right, there is a search bar and a chat icon.

# M1: Icons in the company website to connect WBSC users to company SM profile(s) (3/3)

Supported stages of consumer decision process (E.B.M. model)

Information Search ✓

Evaluation of alternatives ✓

Purchase

Post-purchase

Supported stages of the WBSC user configuration process

Development of initial configuration idea ✓

Preliminary configuration generation

Final configuration evaluation

Social needs fulfilled by WBSC-SSA connection

*Social Involvement (SI)*

**Indirectly provided**

*Social Feedback (SF)*

**Indirectly provided**

# M2: Icons in the WBSC to connect WBSC users to their SM profile(s) - Variant M2.1 (1/3)

**Variant M2.1** – The WBSC contains one or more SM icons that bring the user to his own corresponding SM profile to automatically publish the link to the entry page of the configurator.



# M2: Icons in the WBSC to connect WBSC users to their SM profile(s) - Variant M2.1 (2/3)

**variant M2.1** – The WBSC contains one or more SM icons that bring the user to his own corresponding SM profile to automatically publish the link to the entry page of the configurator.

The image is a screenshot of a Facebook profile page for Kiara Grosso. The browser address bar shows the URL <https://www.facebook.com/kiara.grosso.3>. The profile header includes the name 'Kiara Grosso', a profile picture, and navigation tabs for 'Diario', 'Informazioni', 'Foto', 'Amici 104', and 'Altro'. A central post shows a status update: 'Stato Foto/video Avvenimento importante'. The main content of the post is a link shared by Kiara Grosso 4 minutes ago, titled 'Sites-jonathan-adler-us-Site' by Jonathan Adler, with the URL 'JONATHANADLER.COM'. This link title is circled in red. To the left, there is a section titled 'Kiara, quale università hai frequentato?' with a progress bar at 44%. It lists three universities: 'UIC. Universitat Internacional de Catalunya', 'Universitat de Barcelona', and 'ESCAC'. To the right, there is a sidebar with a 'Recenti' section showing years from 2012 to 2011, and a list of friends' names.

# M2: Icons in the WBSC to connect WBSC users to their SM profile(s) - *Variant M2.1 (3/3)*

Supported stages of consumer decision process (E.B.M. model)

Information Search ✓

Evaluation of alternatives ✓

Purchase ✓

Post-purchase ✓

Supported stages of the WBSC user configuration process

Development of initial configuration idea ✓

Preliminary configuration generation ✓

Final configuration evaluation ✓

Social needs fulfilled by WBSC-SSA connection

*Social Involvement (SI)*

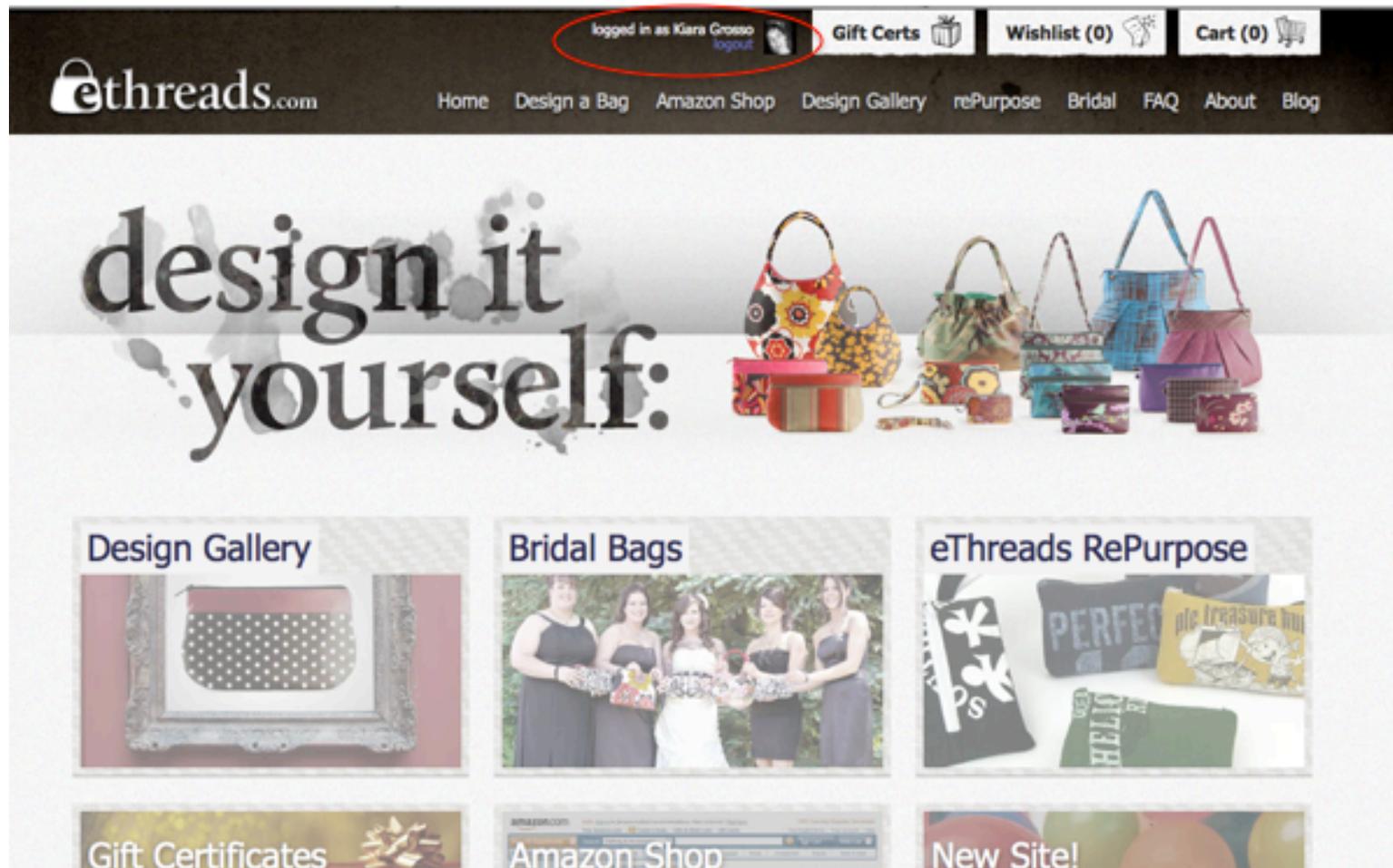
**Low**

*Social Feedback (SF)*

**Low**

## M2: Icons in the WBSC to connect WBSC users to their SM profile(s) - Variant M2.2 (1/4)

**Variant M2.2** – One or more SM icons are placed in the WBSC. Each icon brings the user to his corresponding SM profile to share a complete configuration. The WBSC's user can also add personal comments along with the complete configuration while he is still in the configuration environment.



## M2: Icons in the WBSC to connect WBSC users to their SM profile(s) - Variant M2.2 (2/4)

**Variant M2.2** – One or more SM icons are placed in the WBSC. Each icon brings the user to his corresponding SM profile to share a complete configuration. The WBSC's user can also add personal comments along with the complete configuration while he is still in the configuration environment.

The image shows a product page for a 'Ruffle Tote' bag. The bag is green and black with a floral pattern and red handles. The price is \$170. The page includes several social media sharing buttons: 'ADD to CART', 'ADD to WISHLIST', 'TWEET this BAG', and 'SAVE to FACEBOOK'. The 'SAVE to FACEBOOK' button has a checked box for 'show on timeline'. There are also buttons for 'Edit this Bag' and 'Pin It'. The page shows a user profile for 'Kiara Grosso' with a 'Like' button and a 'Share' button. There are 0 comments and a 'Sort by Top' dropdown. A comment input field is visible at the bottom.

**Ruffle Tote \$170**

by: Kiara Grosso

Pin It

Like Share You like this.

0 Comments Sort by Top

Add a comment...

ADD to CART

ADD to WISHLIST

TWEET this BAG

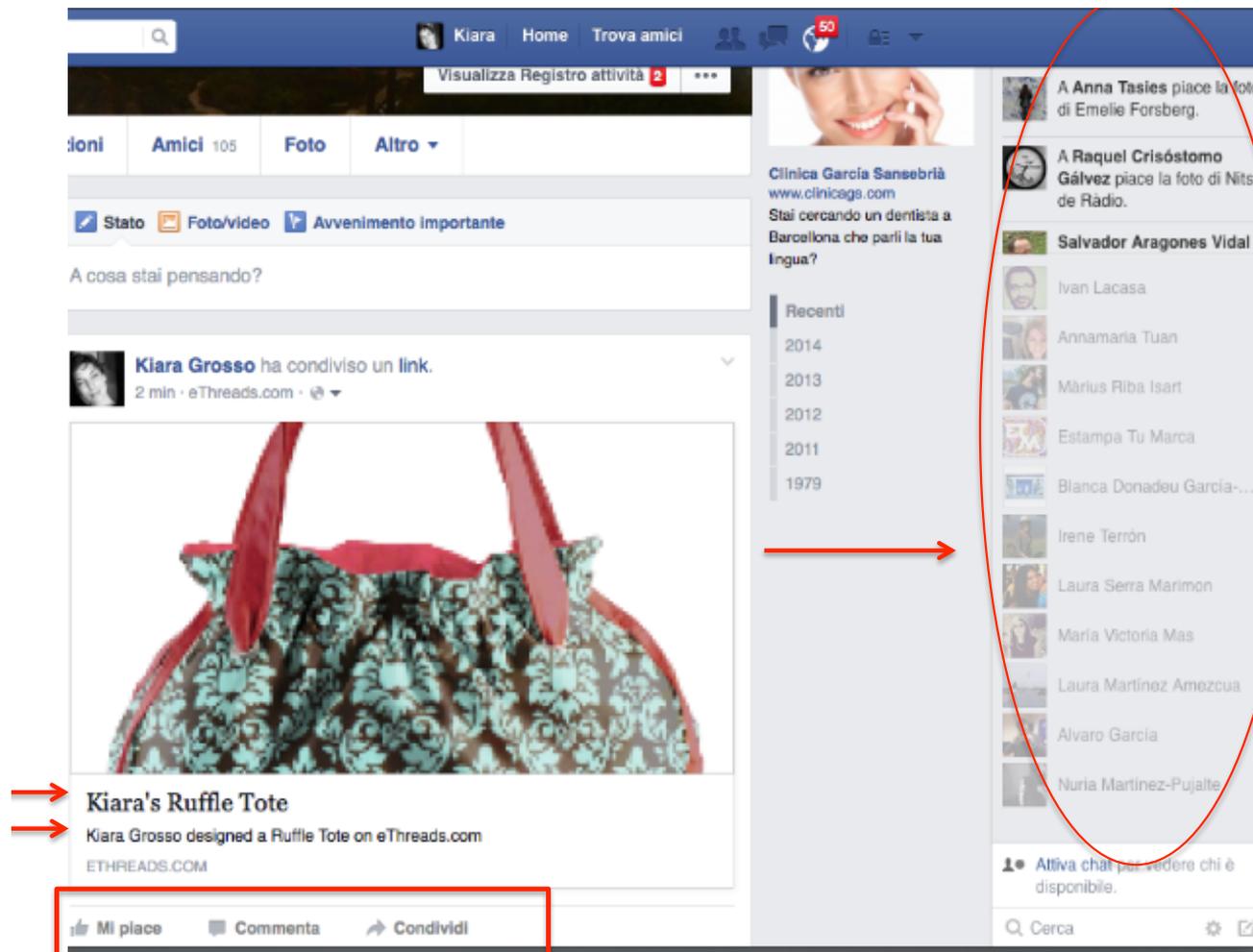
SAVE to FACEBOOK

show on timeline

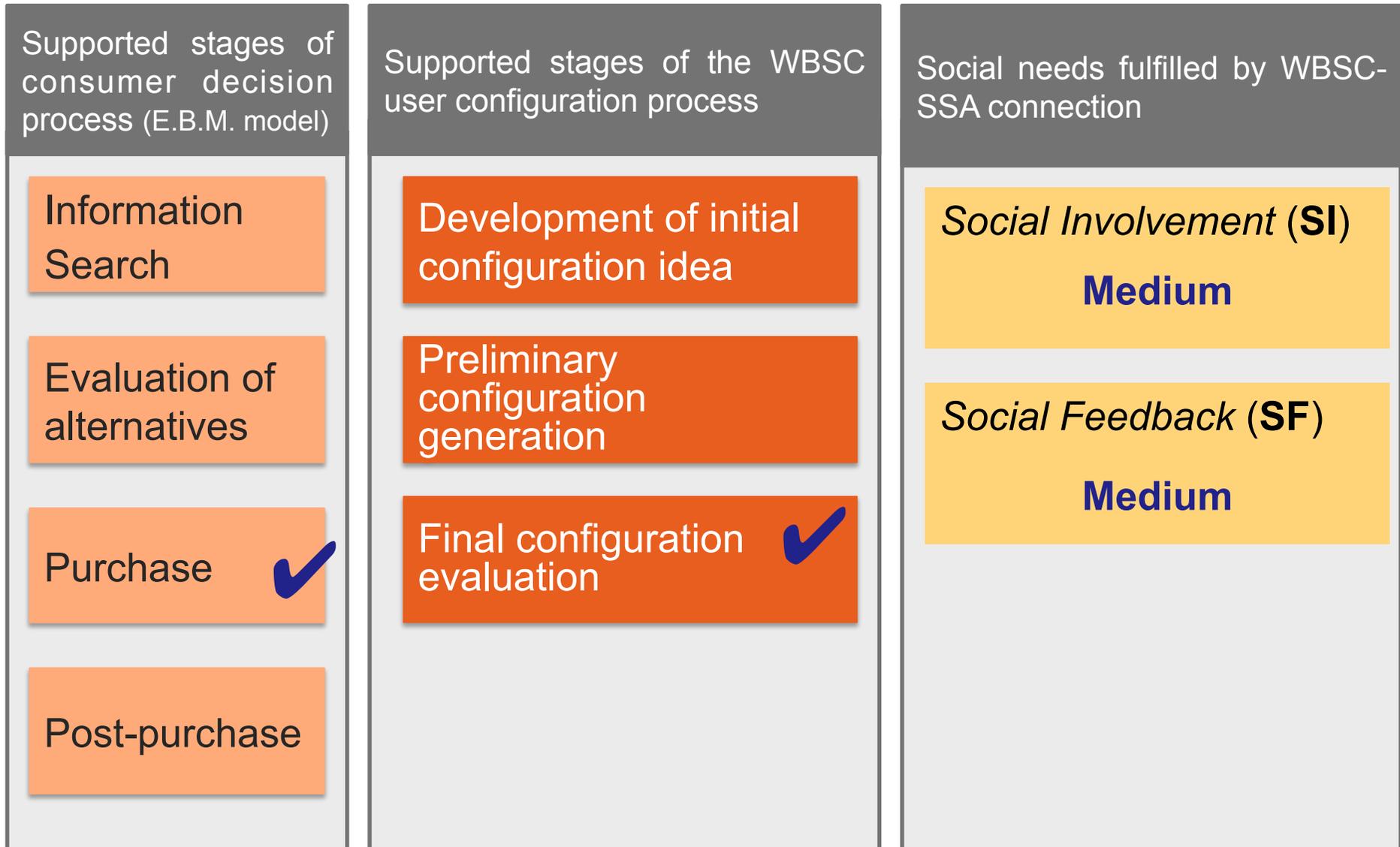
Edit this Bag

## M2: Icons in the WBSC to connect WBSC users to their SM profile(s) - Variant M2.2 (3/4)

**Variant M2.2** – One or more SM icons are placed in the WBSC. Each icon brings the user to his corresponding SM profile to share a complete configuration. The WBSC's user can also add personal comments along with the complete configuration while he is still in the configuration environment.



# M2: Icons in the WBSC to connect WBSC users to their SM profile(s)- Variant M2.2 (4/4)



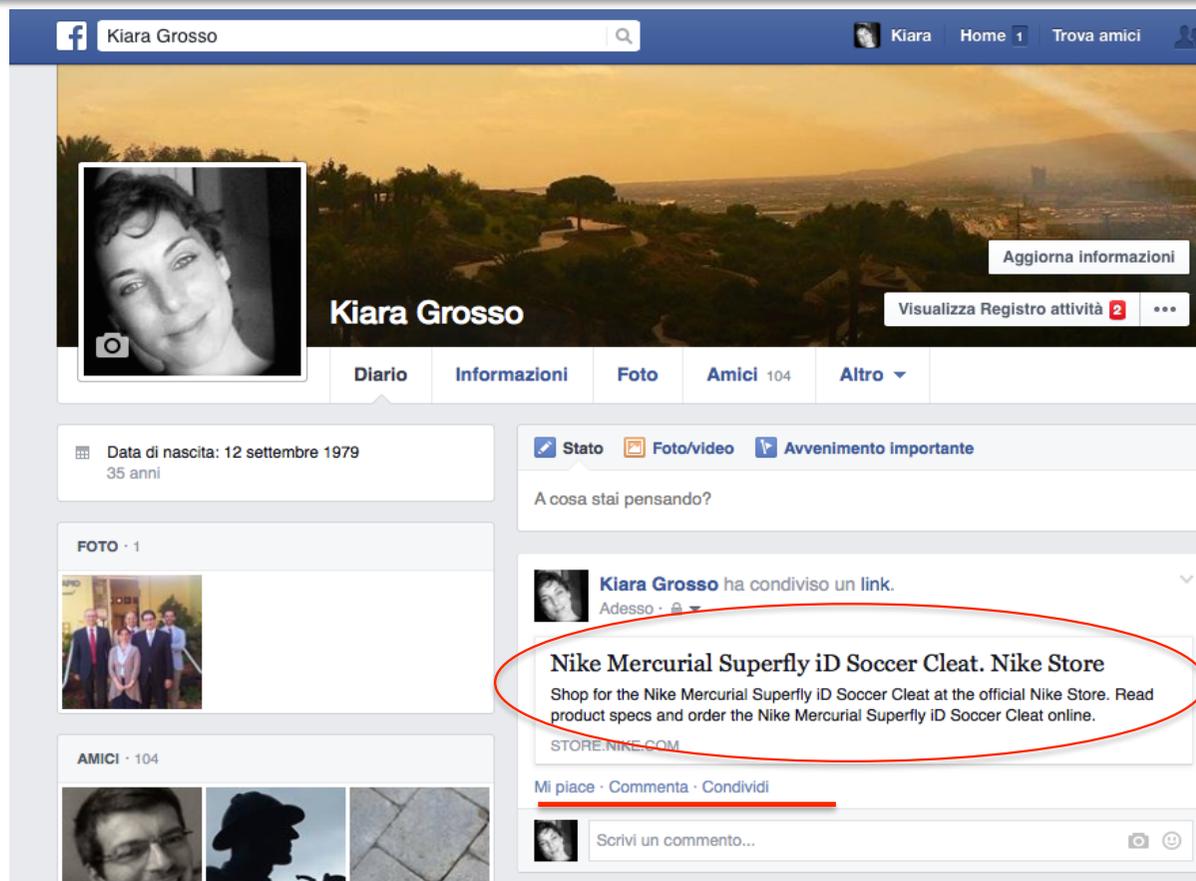
## M2: Icons in the WBSC to connect WBSC users to their SM profile(s) - Variant M2.3 (1/3)

**Variant M2.3** – SM icons are inserted into the WBSC, each icon brings the user to his correspondent SM profile where it automatically publishes a partial configuration while the configuration is on-going. The user can add personal comments about the partial configuration that he is going to publish on his SM profiles.



# M2: Icons in the WBSC to connect WBSC users to their SM profile(s) - Variant M2.3 (2/3)

**Variant M2.3** – SM icons are inserted into the WBSC, each icon brings the user to his correspondent SM profile where it automatically publishes a partial configuration while the configuration is on-going. The user can add personal comments about the partial configuration that he is going to publish on his SM profiles.



# M2: Icons in the WBSC to connect WBSC users to their SM profile(s) - Variant M2.3 (3/3)

Supported stages of consumer decision process (E.B.M. model)

Information Search

Evaluation of alternatives ✓

Purchase ✓

Post-purchase

Supported stages of the WBSC user configuration process

Development of initial configuration idea

Preliminary configuration generation ✓

Final configuration evaluation ✓

Social needs fulfilled by WBSC-SSA connection

*Social Involvement (SI)*  
**Medium-high**

*Social Feedback (SF)*  
**Medium**

# M3: Direct browse/upload from the WBSC of files shared in the personal SM profile(s) (1/3)

*The WBSC embeds one or more SM icons. While the configuration is on-going the user can access his SM folders by clicking a SM icon. Each icon brings the user to his SM folders to browse and directly upload an item in the configured product (e.g. photo, image, drawing)*

The screenshot shows a product page for 'Motherload Diamond Mount Red Blend' wine. The page features a dark red header with the text 'Delivery times & prices' and 'PERSONALWINE'. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for 'Wine', 'Accessories', 'Templates', 'Corporate', 'Contact', and 'More'. The main content area displays a wine bottle with a red label that has a white wine glass icon and the text 'PERSONAL WINE'. To the right of the bottle, the text reads '2012 Motherload Diamond Mount Red Blend' followed by 'elegance · raspberry · mocha'. Below this is a section titled 'What you need to know' with a paragraph of descriptive text. At the bottom right, there is a shopping cart icon and the text 'ADD TO CART', a dropdown menu labeled 'SELECT A CUSTOMIZATION', and a red button labeled 'ADD + CUSTOMIZE'.

Delivery times & prices PERSONALWINE

Wine Accessories Templates Corporate Contact More

2012  
Motherload Diamond Mount  
Red Blend

elegance · raspberry · mocha

What you need to know

A blend of 55% Merlot and 45% Cabernet Franc varietals. fruit with vanilla, dark chocolate and mocha notes. Lots of power, but also incredibly balanced and elegant. An incredible highest elevation vineyards in Napa Valley, Diamond Mount 2020.

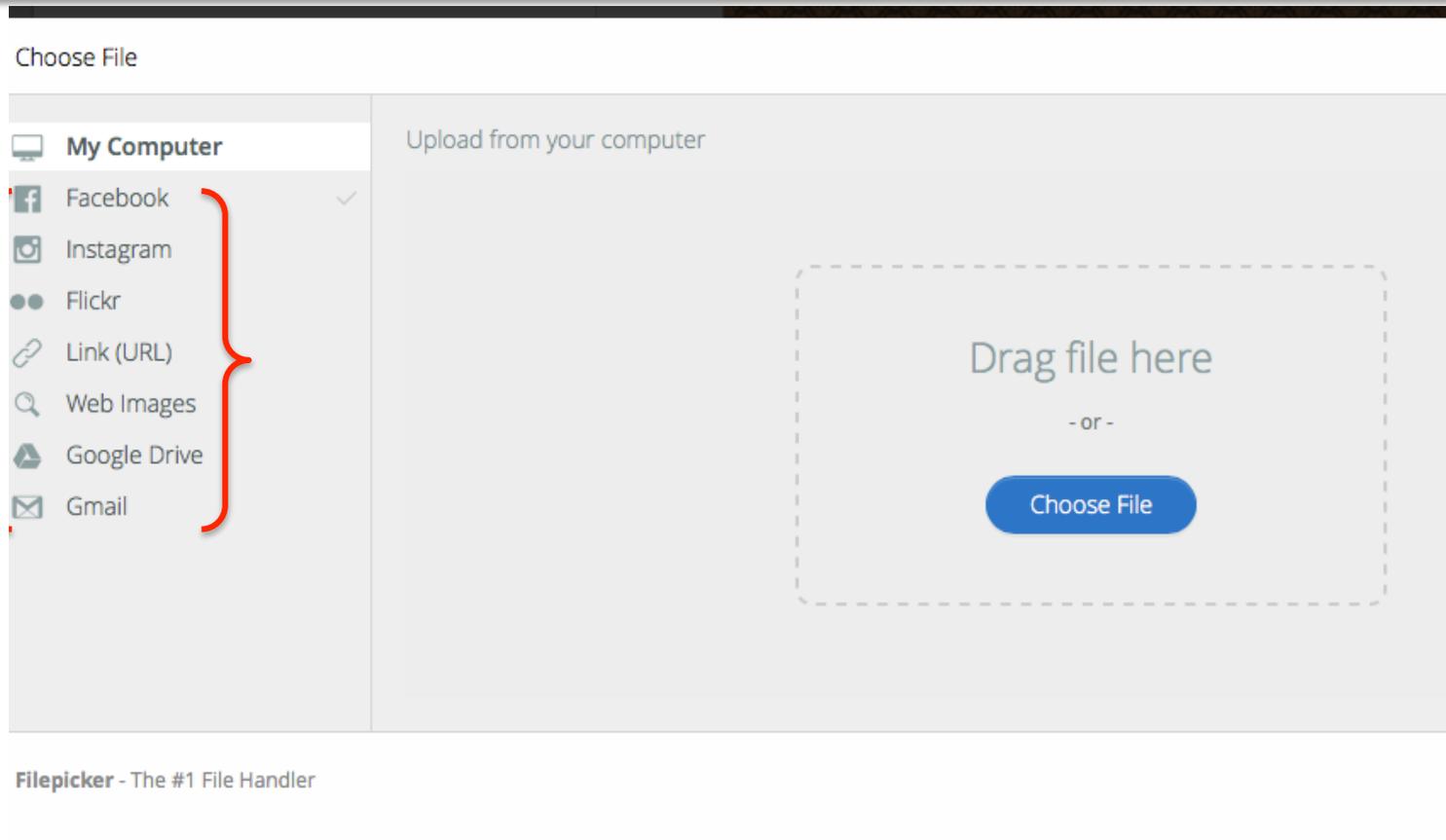
ADD TO CART

SELECT A CUSTOMIZATION

ADD + CUSTOMIZE

## M3: Direct browse/upload from the WBSC of files shared in the personal SM profile(s) (2/3)

*The WBSC embeds one or more SM icons. While the configuration is on-going the user can access his SM folders by clicking a SM icon. Each icon brings the user to his SM folders to browse and directly upload an item in the configured product (e.g. photo, image, drawing)*



# M3: Direct browse/upload from the WBSC of files shared in the personal SM profile(s) (3/3)

Supported stages of consumer decision process (E.B.M. model)

Information Search

Evaluation of alternatives ✓

Purchase ✓

Post-purchase

Supported stages of the WBSC user configuration process

Development of initial configuration idea ✓

Preliminary configuration generation ✓

Final configuration evaluation

Social needs fulfilled by WBSC-SSA connection

*Social Involvement (SI)*

**Not provided.**

*Social Feedback (SF)*

**Indirectly provided**

# M4: Simplified WBSC embedded in company SN profile(s) (1/3)

*A simplified WBSC configurator is embedded into a company's SN profile as an application of the company's SN profile and it is visible as an ad hoc page. Since the configuration choices are very limited the simplified WBSC works as a demo-configurator by providing a very constrained configuration process.*

The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook profile for Vauxhall. The profile header includes the Vauxhall logo and the name 'Vauxhall Automobili'. Below the header, there are navigation tabs: 'Diario', 'Informazioni', 'Foto', 'ADAM Configurator', and 'Altre'. A blue arrow points from the 'ADAM Configurator' tab to a large red banner that reads 'THE NEW VAUXHALL ADAM' with a 'Share' button. Another blue arrow points from the 'ADAM Configurator' tab to a video player below the banner. A red circle highlights the right-hand side of the page, which contains a list of users who have liked the page, including Julián Marín Bazalo, Begoña GE, Patricia Ginés, Roberto Boselli, David Li Puma, Xevi Pigem, Oscar Sueiro, María Victoria Mas, Aurora Oliva López, Màrius Riba Isart, Alvaro García, Ricard Mambiona, Salvador Aragones Vidal, and Oscar Armengol Draper.

# M4: Simplified WBSC embedded in company SN profile(s) (2/3)

*A simplified WBSC configurator is embedded into a company's SN profile as an application of the company's SN profile and it is visible as an ad hoc page. Since the configuration choices are very limited the simplified WBSC works as a demo-configurator by providing a very constrained configuration process.*

The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook profile for 'Vauxhall'. The main content area features a large advertisement for the 'THE NEW VAUXHALL ADAM'. The ad includes a blue car, a grid of color swatches, and a red button that says 'Send your Vauxhall ADAM to your friends!'. Below the car, there is a link to 'MEET THE ADAM *Pinterest* CONFIGURATOR'. On the right side of the page, there is a sidebar with a 'Crea una Pagina' button, a sponsored post for 'Volare a Venezia' from alitalia.com, and a list of friends. A blue-bordered window is overlaid on the bottom right, showing a friend's profile for 'Annamaria Tuan' with a post that says 'Siete amici su Facebook' and 'Assegnista di ricerca presso Università di Pisa'. At the bottom of this window, there is a text input field with the text 'I'm configuring an opel Adam any advice?' and a 'Post' button.

# M4: Simplified WBSC embedded in company SN profile(s) (3/3)

Supported stages of consumer decision process (E.B.M. model)

Information Search ✓

Evaluation of alternatives ✓

Purchase

Post-purchase

Supported stages of the WBSC user configuration process

Development of initial configuration idea ✓

Preliminary configuration generation

Final configuration evaluation

Social needs fulfilled by WBSC-SSA connection

*Social Involvement (SI)*

**High**

*Social Feedback (SF)*

**High**

# M5:Weblog (Blog) in the company website to connect WBSC users to relevant others - Variant M5.1 (1/2)

**Variant M5.1**-The company website provides a link to connect website users to the Blog Diary. The Blog-Diary mainly provides contents that refers to brand events, sponsorships, competitions. Contents are provided only by company representatives.

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Blog GBP

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# M5: Weblog (Blog) in the company website to connect WBSC users to relevant others - *Variant M5.1 (2/2)*

Supported stages of consumer decision process (E.B.M. model)

Information Search ✓

Evaluation of alternatives ✓

Purchase

Post-purchase

Supported stages of the WBSC user configuration process

Development of initial configuration idea ✓

Preliminary configuration generation

Final configuration evaluation

Social needs fulfilled by WBSC-SSA connection

*Social Involvement (SI)*

**Not provided**

*Social Feedback (SF)*

**Not provided**

# M5: Weblog (Blog) in the company website to connect WBSC users to relevant others - Variant M5.2 (1/2)

**Variant M5.2** - The company website provides a link to connect users with the Blog-Post. The Blog-Post mainly provides contents that refers to functional information (e.g. product functionalities or features). Contents are provided both by company representatives and other blog users.

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## Puget Systems Blog Posts

Resources  
Hardware Articles  
Blog  
HPC Blog ←

Policies  
Warranty & Return  
Privacy  
Delivery Times  
Response Times

View: All Posts **Blog** Articles HPC Blog Systems

**My Privacy Preferences in Windows 10**  
Written on September 4, 2015 by William George

*There has been a lot of talk about privacy concerns in Windows 10 lately, and several good articles have been published covering what settings are available to restrict the amount of information being sent back to Microsoft. I don't presume to be able to do a better job than any of those authors, but having now had a few customers ask me about this stuff I thought it might be nice to share what settings I personally change on my Windows 10 computers.*

Posted in Software, Industry | 0 Comments

**Windows 10 Sales**  
Written on August 28, 2015 by Brett Nordquist

*Nearly every day a customer asks me how Windows 10 is doing in terms of sales. It's usually wise to wait a few months to gauge how a new operating system is performing. As much as Microsoft wants everyone to move to Windows 10, it can*

# M5: Weblog (Blog) in the company website to connect WBSC users to relevant others - *Variant M5.2 (2/2)*

Supported stages of consumer decision process (E.B.M. model)

Information Search ✓

Evaluation of alternatives ✓

Purchase ✓

Post-purchase ✓

Supported stages of the WBSC user configuration process

Development of initial configuration idea ✓

Preliminary configuration generation ✓

Final configuration evaluation ✓

Social needs fulfilled by WBSC-SSA connection

*Social Involvement (SI)*  
**Medium-low**

*Social Feedback (SF)*  
**low**

# M6: Company Discussion Forum to connect WBSC users to relevant others (1/2)

The company website provides a link to bring users to a company Discussion Forum (DF).

The screenshot displays the Dell Community website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Dell logo and links for Shop, Support, and Community. A search bar is positioned to the right of the Community link. Below this, a secondary navigation bar includes links for Support Forums, Blogs, Groups, What Do I Buy, Owners Club, IdeaStorm, and TechCenter. The main content area features a breadcrumb trail: DELL.COM > Community. Below the breadcrumb, there are tabs for Home, Blog, Forums, Wikis, Videos and Webcasts, and Script Center. A large banner on the left reads "Welcome to the Dell Community" and encourages users to check out blogs, forums, and groups. To the right of the banner is a photo of four people looking at a laptop. Further right, there are sections for "Support Forums" (Laptops, Desktops, Disk Drives, More), "Dell Community Blogs" (Direct2Dell, Dell4Enterprise, More), and "Software Forums, Blogs and Videos" (IAM, WM, Data Protection, More). Social media icons for Google+, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube are also present. A "Featured Content" section highlights a video series on Windows 10 and a ProSupport Plus announcement. At the bottom left, there is a "Recent Activity" section with tabs for Forums and Blogs, showing a post about "Product key windows 7" and a reply. A "Site - Search" section with a search bar and a "Simplify your purchasing support" button is located at the bottom right.

# M6: Company Discussion Forum to connect WBSC users to relevant others (2/2)

Supported stages of consumer decision process (E.B.M. model)

Information Search ✓

Evaluation of alternatives ✓

Purchase ✓

Post-purchase ✓

Supported stages of the WBSC user configuration process

Development of initial configuration idea ✓

Preliminary configuration generation ✓

Final configuration evaluation ✓

Social needs fulfilled by WBSC-SSA connection

*Social Involvement (SI)*  
**Medium**

*Social Feedback (SF)*  
**Medium**

# M7: e-mail service to connect WBSC users to relevant others - Variant M7.1 (1/2)

**Variant M7.1** - The WBSC provides an email service directly accessible from the WBSC at the end of the configuration process. M7 supports the sending of a final configuration to one or more members of the user's reference groups.

The screenshot shows a web interface for configuring a custom ice cream product. At the top left, a note states: **\*\*Create Your Own Flavor Orders\*\* may require up to 3 business days to custom churn. You will then be able to select your delivery date and shipping method.**

The main product label is a circle containing the text **chiara** in a large, bold, black font, and **Ice Cream** in a smaller, black, cursive font. Below the label, the flavor is described: **Lemon Sorbet with Almonds, Brownie Bites & Butter Brickle Ice Cream**. To the right of the label is a configuration panel with three columns: **Text**, **Font**, and **Size**. The **Text** column has two input fields: the first contains "chiara" and the second contains "Ice Cream". The **Font** column has two dropdown menus: the first is set to "Ed Brush" and the second to "Ed Script". The **Size** column has two dropdown menus: the first is set to "180" and the second to "185". Below the configuration panel is a button that says "Click to Preview Label".

Below the label, there is a "Select Size" section with two radio buttons: "4 Pints" (selected) and "8 Pints". Below this are three product images labeled "The Lola", "The Felix", and "The Bella\*", each with a corresponding radio button. To the right of the product images are four buttons: "Add to Cart" (with a shopping cart icon), "EMAIL TO FRIEND", "SAVE FOR LATER", and "SUBMIT TO CONTEST". Below these buttons is a "Chat with us" button with a speech bubble icon.

Annotations in red boxes and arrows point to various elements:

- A box labeled "Custom-product." points to the main product label.
- A box labeled "e.Mail to a friend yr custom product;" points to the "EMAIL TO FRIEND" button.
- A box labeled "Save for later;" points to the "SAVE FOR LATER" button.
- A box labeled "Submit to contest, no purchase necessary" points to the "SUBMIT TO CONTEST" button.
- A box labeled "Chat with us" points to the "Chat with us" button.

# M7: e-mail service to connect WBSC users to relevant others - Variant M7.1 (2/2)

Supported stages of consumer decision process (E.B.M. model)

Information Search

Evaluation of alternatives

Purchase ✓

Post-purchase

Supported stages of WBSC user's configuration process

Development of initial configuration idea

Preliminary configuration generation

Final configuration evaluation ✓

Social needs fulfilled by WBSC-SSA connection

*Social Involvement (SI)*

**Low**

*Social Feedback (SF)*

**Low**

# M7: e-mail service to connect WBSC users to relevant others - Variant M7.2 (1/2)

**Variant M7.2** - The company website provides the e-mail service as customer's service.

The image shows a screenshot of the J.L. Hufford website. The top navigation bar includes links for HOME, ABOUT US, MY ACCOUNT, and HELP. A search bar is located in the top right corner, with a cart icon showing "MY CART: 0, \$0.00". Below the navigation bar, there are categories like NEW ARRIVALS, BESTSELLERS, and FACTORY OUTLET. A prominent banner advertises "Save Up To 20% Some Exclusions". The main content area is divided into a left sidebar with "Filter Results" and a main product listing. The "Filter Results" section includes options to filter by Brand (JLHufford (4)), Coffee (Unflavored Blends (1), Flavored Blends (2), Espresso (1), Decaf Coffees (1)), and Espresso (Decaf Roast Espresso (1), Medium Roast Espresso (1), Mild Roast Espresso (1), Strong Roast Espresso (1)). The main product listing shows "JL Hufford Build-Your-Own Flavored Coffee" with a regular price of \$11.99 and an "ADD TO CART" button. An "Email Us For Support" form is overlaid on the right side of the page, featuring input fields for Name and Email, a text area for the question, and an "Email us" button. The form also includes a search icon, a close button (X), and a page indicator showing "Page 1 of 1".

# M7: e-mail service to connect WBSC users to relevant others - Variant M7.2 (2/2)

Supported stages of consumer decision process (E.B.M. model)	Supported stages of WBSC user's configuration process	Social needs fulfilled by WBSC-SSA connection
Information Search ✓	Development of initial configuration idea ✓	<i>Social Involvement (SI)</i> <b>Low</b>
Evaluation of alternatives ✓	Preliminary configuration generation ✓	<i>Social Feedback (SF)</i> <b>Low</b>
Purchase ✓	Final configuration evaluation ✓	
Post-purchase ✓		

# M8: Instant message services to connect WBSC users to company customer service (1/2)

The company website provides a real-time messaging service (Chat) as customer service. The M8 is placed either outside or inside the WBSC, in both cases it enables real-time communication exchanges only between company representatives and customers.



PRODUCTS

Real Person

ABOUT US

Looking for something at CustomInk.com?

The requested page was not found. This sometimes happens when a link is broken, incomplete or cut short. Try these links below to find what you're looking for or

- Home
- Retrieve A Design
- Track An Order
- Browse Products



We Believe T-shirts Unite!™

Custom t-shirts have the power to turn your group into a team, elevate your group more... well, momentous. That's why we make it easy to create awesome



Talk to a Real Person  
800-293-4232



Chat with a Real Person  
CHAT NOW

Chat Window

Live Chat by **LIVEPERSON**

Welcome!

Before we chat, can you tell us a few things that will help us better assist you?

What is your name?

Your email address:

Your delivery ZIP code:

What can we help you with today? \*

Required Items Indicated with \*.

Start Chat

Hello!

We're happy to help.

Keep Up with CustomInk

Find Out More

Talk to a Real Person  
7 Days a Week

# M8: Instant message services to connect WBSC users to company customer service (3/3)

Supported stages of consumer decision process (E.B.M. model)	Supported stages of WBSC user's configuration process	Social needs fulfilled by WBSC-SSA connection
Information Search ✓	Development of initial configuration idea ✓	<i>Social Involvement (SI)</i> <b>High</b>
Evaluation of alternatives ✓	Preliminary configuration generation ✓	<i>Social Feedback (SF)</i> <b>Medium-high</b>
Purchase ✓	Final configuration evaluation ✓	
Post-purchase ✓		

# WBSCs-SSAs connections Overview (1/5)

Connection Modality	Variant	EBM stages				SF	SI
		a	b	c	d		
		1-2		3			
		CONF. process					
M1 - Icons in the company website to connect WBSC users to company SM profile(s)	-					Ip	Ip
M2 - Icons on the WBSC to connect WBSC users to their SM profile(s)	M2.1					Low	Low
	M2.2					Med	Med
	M2.3					Med-High	Med
M3 - Direct browse/upload from the WBSC of files shared in the personal SM profile	-					Np	Ip
M4 - Simplified WBSC embedded in company SN profile	-					High	High
M5 - Weblog (Blog) on the company website to connect WBSC users to relevant others	M5.1					Np	Np
	M5.2					Med-low	Med-low
M6 - Company Discussion Forum to connect WBSC users to relevant others	-					Med	Med
M7 - e-mail service to connect WBSC users to relevant others	M7.1					Low	Low
	M7.2					Low	Low
M8 - Instant message services to connect WBSC users to company customer service	-					Med-High	High

*EBM stages: a: information search; b: alternative evaluation; c: purchase; d: post-purchase.*  
**CONF. process.** 1: initial idea development; 2: intermediate evaluation; 3: configuration evaluation. **SF/SI.** Ip: support for the fulfillment of SF/SI is indirectly provided; Np: support is not provided; Low: support is low; Med-low: support is medium-low; etc.

## WBSC-SSA connection modalities

**M1: Icons in the company website to connect WBSC users to company SM profile(s)**

**M2: Icons in the WBSC to connect WBSC users to their SM profile(s)**  
**variants M2.1 - M2.2 - M2.3**

**M3: Direct browse/upload from the WBSC of files shared in the personal SM profile(s)**

**M4: Simplified WBSC embedded in company SN profile(s)**

**M5: Weblog (Blog) in the company website to connect WBSC users to relevant others:**  
**variants M5.1 - M5.2**

**M6: Company Discussion Forum to connect WBSC users to relevant others**

**M7: E-mail service to connect WBSC users to relevant others: variants M7.1 - M7.2**

**M8: Instant message services to connect WBSC users to company customer service**

# Overview (2/5)

1. Adopt WBSCs-SSAs connection modalities that provide a **two-way** exchange of information (i.e. from the WBSC to SSAs and vice versa).

Connection Modality	Variant	EBM stages				SF	SI
		a	b	c	d		
		1-2		3			
		CONF. process					
M1 - Icons in the company website to connect WBSC users to company SM profile(s)	-					Ip	Ip
M2 - Icons on the WBSC to connect WBSC users to their SM profile(s)	M2.1					Low	Low
	M2.2					Med	Med
	M2.3					Med-High	Med
M3 - Direct browse/upload from the WBSC of files shared in the personal SM profile	-					Np	Ip
M4 - Simplified WBSC embedded in company SN profile	-					High	High
M5 - Weblog (Blog) on the company website to connect WBSC users to relevant others	M5.1					Np	Np
	M5.2					Med-low	Med-low
M6 - Company Discussion Forum to connect WBSC users to relevant others	-					Med	Med
M7 - e-mail service to connect WBSC users to relevant others	M7.1					Low	Low
	M7.2					Low	Low
M8 - Instant message services to connect WBSC users to company customer service	-					Med-High	High

**EBM Stages.** a: information search; b: alternative evaluation; c: purchase; d: post-purchase.  
**CONF. process.** 1: initial idea development; 2: intermediate evaluation; 3: configuration evaluation.  
**SF/SI.** Ip: support for the fulfillment of SF/SI is indirectly provided; Np: support is not provided; Low: support is low; Med-low: support is medium-low; etc.

# Overview (3/5)

1. Connect a WBSC with SSAs in a way that supports two-way exchange of information (i.e. from the WBSC to SSAs and vice versa).
2. Adopt WBSCs-SSAs connections modalities that provide sharing options and feedback directly **in the same configuration environment** to prevent the user from leaving the WBSC.

Connection Modality	Variant	EBM stages				SF	SI
		a	b	c	d		
		1-2		3			
		CONF. process					
M1 - Icons in the company website to connect WBSC users to company SM profile(s)	-					Ip	Ip
M2 - Icons on the WBSC to connect WBSC users to their SM profile(s)	M2.1					Low	Low
	M2.2					Med	Med
	M2.3					Med-High	Med
M3 - Direct browse/upload from the WBSC of files shared in the personal SM profile	-					Np	Ip
M4 - Simplified WBSC embedded in company SN profile	-					High	High
M5 - Weblog (Blog) on the company website to connect WBSC users to relevant others	M5.1					Np	Np
	M5.2					Med-low	Med-low
M6 - Company Discussion Forum to connect WBSC users to relevant others	-					Med	Med
M7 - e-mail service to connect WBSC users to relevant others	M7.1					Low	Low
	M7.2					Low	Low
M8 - Instant message services to connect WBSC users to company customer service	-					Med-High	High
<p><b>EBM Stages.</b> a: information search; b: alternative evaluation; c: purchase; d: post-purchase.  <b>CONF. process.</b> 1: initial idea development; 2: intermediate evaluation; 3: configuration evaluation.  <b>SF/SI.</b> Ip: support for the fulfillment of SF/SI is indirectly provided; Np: support is not provided; Low: support is low; Med-low: support is medium-low; etc.</p>							

# Overview (4/5)

Connection Modality	Variant	EBM stages				SF	SI
		a	b	c	d		
		1-2		3			
		CONF. process					
M1 - Icons in the company website to connect WBSC users to company SM profile(s)	-					Ip	Ip
M2 - Icons on the WBSC to connect WBSC users to their SM profile(s)	M2.1					Low	Low
	M2.2					Med	Med
	M2.3					Med-High	Med
M3 - Direct browse/upload from the WBSC of files shared in the personal SM profile	-					Np	Ip
M4 - Simplified WBSC embedded in company SN profile	-					High	High
M5 - Weblog (Blog) on the company website to connect WBSC users to relevant others	M5.1					Np	Np
	M5.2					Med-low	Med-low
M6 - Company Discussion Forum to connect WBSC users to relevant others	-					Med	Med
M7 - e-mail service to connect WBSC users to relevant others	M7.1					Low	Low
	M7.2					Low	Low
M8 - Instant message services to connect WBSC users to company customer service	-					Med-High	High

**EBM Stages.** a: information search; b: alternative evaluation; c: purchase; d: post-purchase.  
**CONF. process.** 1: initial idea development; 2: intermediate evaluation; 3: configuration evaluation.  
**SF/SI.** Ip: support for the fulfillment of SF/SI is indirectly provided; Np: support is not provided; Low: support is low; Med-low: support is medium-low; etc.

2. Insert a WBSC-SSAs connections that provide sharing options and feedback directly in the same configuration environment to prevent the user from leaving the WBSC.

3. Adopt WBSCs-SSAs connection that enable the user to choose **with whom** share his configuration experience, as well as **from whom receive feedback** (e.g. feedback from relevant others, experts) **without leaving the configuration** environment.

# Overview (5/5)

Connection Modality	Variant	EBM stages				SF	SI
		a	b	c	d		
		1-2		3			
		CONF. process					
M1 - Icons in the company website to connect WBS users to company SM profile(s)	-					Ip	Ip
M2 - Icons on the WBS to connect WBS users to their SM profile(s)	M2.1					Low	Low
	M2.2					Med	Med
	M2.3					Med-High	Med
M3 - Direct browse/upload from the WBS of files shared in the personal SM profile	-					Np	Ip
M4 - Simplified WBS embedded in company SN profile	-					High	High
M5 - Weblog (Blog) on the company website to connect WBS users to relevant others	M5.1					Np	Np
	M5.2					Med-low	Med-low
M6 - Company Discussion Forum to connect WBS users to relevant others	-					Med	Med
M7 - e-mail service to connect WBS users to relevant others	M7.1					Low	Low
	M7.2					Low	Low
M8 - Instant message services to connect WBS users to company customer service	-					Med-High	High

**EBM Stages.** a: information search; b: alternative evaluation; c: purchase; d: post-purchase.  
**CONF. process.** 1: initial idea development; 2: intermediate evaluation; 3: configuration evaluation.  
**SF/SI.** Ip: support for the fulfillment of SF/SI is indirectly provided; Np: support is not provided; Low: support is low; Med-low: support is medium-low; etc.

3. Insert SSAs that enable the user to choose from whom to be supported without leaving the configuration environment (e.g. feedback from people relevant to him/her).
4. Adopt connection modalities that provide **sharing options and feedback** information exactly when the user needs them (**on-demand**) and make sure that support and feedback are **focused on** his/her **individual request**.

# CONCLUSIONS (1/2)

- **We have empirically identified different WBSCs-SSAs connections**
- We have **empirically identified which** shopping-**configuration stages are supported** by the different connections WBSC-SSA
- We have conceptually showed that **eight WBSCs-SSAs** connections **support in different ways** the shopping-configuration process by fulfilling the user need for **social involvement** (SI) and **social feedback** (SF).
- **Exploiting the fulfilment of** consumers' **social needs can** be one key to enhance the user's quality perception of the configuration process and for a company to **augment the value of** its **Mass-Customization strategy**.

# CONCLUSIONS (2/2)

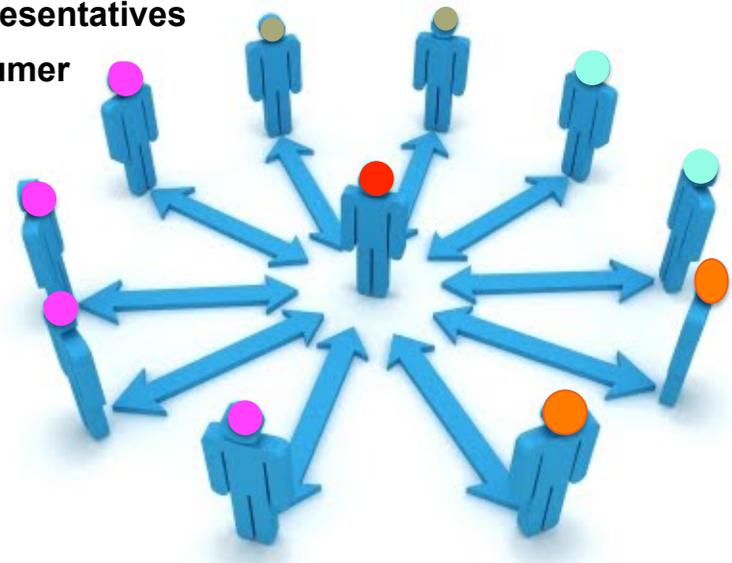


ShopSocially



Configure Socially

- **WBSC User**
- **User relevant others**
- **Peers / other WBSC users**
- **Company representatives**
- **Product consumer**



**Thank you  
for your attention**

*Chiara Grosso, Cipriano Forza, Alessio Trentin*



**UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI  
STUDI DI PADOVA**