WHY DO PEOPLE POST ONLINE?
AN ANALYSIS OF THE ONLINE REVIEW POSTING (ORP) SCALE AS AN EXTENSION TO THE WEB MOTIVATION INVENTORY (WMI)

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by
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DEDICATION

I dedicate the following thesis to my parents, Bill and Terry. I cannot express the depths of my gratitude for the life you have provided. Your love and encouragement have always pushed me to excel personally, professionally, and academically. Thank you for your never-ending support and guidance. I love you.
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Hannah Jones
Dr. Shelly Rodgers, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Online motives are one of the most important starting points for understanding online consumer behavior (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000). The present research draws from existing research and the larger uses and gratifications literature in an effort to understand why consumers post product and service reviews online. The primary goal was to develop an online posting measure, the Online Review Posting (ORP) scale. This was accomplished by conducting a multi-phase study that helped to develop, refine, and validate the ORP. Phase one used 12 in-depth interviews to develop the initial pool of items that would comprise the scale. Phase two was a survey done in two stages. The first stage was a pre-test of initial scale items, and the second stage was the final survey.

To validate the newly developed ORP scale, the ORP scale was then administered alongside the Web Motivation Inventory (WMI), and multiple attitudinal and behavioral items. A total of seven online posting factors emerged from the final survey results (N=115). The predictive validity of the ORP scale was verified, in that certain online motives predicted attitudes toward eWOM and online reviews. Convergent validity was verified, as a significant correlation was found between the existing WMI and the ORP scale. Specifically, a significant correlation was found between the ORP inform/help motive and WMI research, surf, and communicate motives.
Online motivations are central to understanding consumers’ behavior online (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000). Scholars have successfully identified motives relevant to Internet use in general. Well over 100 varying Internet motives have been identified over the years (Rodgers & Sheldon, 2000). However, as a result of the growth of various Internet outlets, macro Internet motives may not adequately predict behavior resulting from specific Internet use. An analysis of micro Internet motives is essential to understand behavior related to the more specific functions of the Internet. The recent growth and popularity of social media and consumer review websites, suggests that people may have different motivations for posting content online. Implicit in the current study is the assumption that if we understand why people use the Internet to post content, better predictions can be made concerning their attitudes and behavior online (Rodgers & Cannon, 2000).

Purpose of Study

The goal of the present research is to identify online posting motives displayed by consumers who post online product and service reviews. The study will develop and validate a scale that tests the relationship between identified online posting motives, and attitudes toward electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and online reviews, online posting behavior, and an existing Internet motives scale, the Web Motivation Inventory (WMI). Online product and service reviews serve as a form of eWOM that has grown substantially over the past decade. eWOM refers to “any positive or negative statement
made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet” (Hennig-Thuraru, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004, p. 39). An online review is a form of eWOM specific to a certain product or service that is posted on an outlet made available by the Internet and its interactive capabilities.

Outlets, such as social media, weblogs, online community bulletin boards, and consumer review websites, foster eWOM through user-generated content (UGC). UGC captures the user-as-producer function of the Internet. Individual consumers, rather than companies or media professionals, create the content that is available to anyone with access to the Internet (Wang & Rodgers, 2011). Thus, a product review is both UGC and eWOM. Although “UGC and eWOM are distinct concepts, they are related; to be successful, eWOM depends on the dissemination of content, and UGC has less influence without eWOM” (Cheong & Morrison, 2010, p. 39). Within the functionalist school of thought the present study draws on the uses and gratifications theory (U&G) to understand the social and psychological motives that predict online review posting. In line with the U&G theory, the study also seeks to connect posting motives to consumer attitudes and behavior. As a test of validation, the present study then compares the identified online posting motives to previously identified general Internet motives outlined in the WMI.

**Rationale**

Traditional word of mouth (WOM) is seen as one of the most important types of advertising in getting consumers to adopt new products and services (Hardey, 2011; Chen & Xi, 2008). It is argued that the Internet has only heightened the importance and
prominence of WOM, because it provides consumers greater access to a plethora of information and a large audience. Consumers have the means to communicate and interact with companies and other consumers in a variety ways, online reviews being one of them. Product and service reviews have become a prominent way consumers gather and give information online. Consumers can easily share their experience and/or feelings toward a product or service by posting UGC. As a result, websites that foster UGC, and thus eWOM, are only increasing in popularity. Review websites such as, Yelp, Angie’s List, and Amazon, and social media outlets, such as Facebook and Twitter, have all garnered success based entirely on UGC.

Goldsmith and Horowitz (2006) contend that consumers use the Internet to exchange product and service related information in much the same way as they do offline. They do, however, site the variety of information exchange avenues available to consumers, anonymity, lack of physical cues, freedom from geographic and time constraints, and the permanence of online conversations as keys differences and reasons why “eWOM deserves investigation as an extension of traditional interpersonal communication into the new realm of cyberspace” (p. 3). This study extends current research by exploring interpersonal communication via online product and services reviews, and attitudes toward eWOM.

The marketing and advertising industries have experienced great change as a result of the Internet and UGC specifically. Consumers have moved online and for many companies the Internet is an essential channel for reaching their specialized target audiences. Many Americans consider the Internet a necessity that extends to nearly every aspect of their lives (Cheong & Morrison, 2010), and the majority of those Americans are
online and looking to review or purchase products. According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, a representative survey of US consumers reported that 78% of Americans conduct product searches on the Internet, and 24% have posted product reviews online (2010). It is clear that content contribution, specifically posting online reviews, is a behavior worthy of investigation. Marketers and advertisers seek to leverage the prominence and popularity of UGC. Similar to scholars, practitioners want to understand specific motivations to create content so they can capitalize on the moments where they can positively engage with consumers and ultimately increase sales.

Written from a marketing perspective, Lecinski’s book, ZMOT: Winning the Zero Moment of Truth, states, “That the question is not whether or not your company wants to start or stop the conversation online, but whether your company chooses to engage or not” (p. 32). Lecinski explained that the Zero Moment of Truth (ZMOT) is the point where consumers turn to their mobile phone, laptop, or tablet to search the Internet for specific product and service information. This behavior is changing the traditional marketing rulebook, in that ZMOT precedes the first moment of truth (FMOT), which takes place at the shelf. Consumers no longer see an advertisement for a product or service and go directly to the store; they first turn to the Internet to find product and service information. In doing so, consumers are assessing others’ opinion of the product or service through reviews and online “chatter.”

The literature that discusses online reviews is largely focused on message valance, number of reviews, and the ability for eWOM to effect product purchases (Dellarocas, Gao, & Narayan, 2010; Li, Hitt, & Zhang, 2011; Benlian, Titah, & Hess, 2012; Lee, Rodgers, & Kim, 2009; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). Previous research has examined the
effects of eWOM rather than consumer needs or motives, which are a key part of the eWOM process according to both functionalism and the U&G theory. eWOM occurs as a result of consumers posting behavior, yet little is understood about consumers’ motivations to post an online review and engage in eWOM. While there are a number of studies that assess Internet motives (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Rodgers & Sheldon, 2002; Flaherty, Pearce, & Rubin, 1998; Rodgers, Jin, Rettie, Alpert, & Yoon, 2006; Ruggiero, 2000), as well as motives to contribute content (Smock, Ellison, Lampe, & Wohn, 2011; Rodgers & Chen, 2005; Chua, Goh, & Lee, 2011; Oeldorf-Hirsch & Sundar, 2010; Chen, 2011; Hollenbaugh, 2011; Baek, Holton, Harp, & Yaschur, 2011), there is very little research on motivations to post online product or service reviews, specifically. Goldsmith and Horowitz (2006) measured motivations for online opinion seeking, but their exploration was limited to the reasons why consumers seek information and advice online. Understanding the reasons why consumers post reviews is an essential first step to understanding any impact or effect of product and service reviews.

**Research Questions**

To extend existing research on Internet motives, it is necessary to examine specific micro motives that may drive or influence different online behaviors, such as posting online product and service reviews. The Internet has changed quite substantially in the past few years and new technologies and platforms, such as social media and consumer review websites, make it easier than ever for individuals to post a good or bad review about a product or service online. Yet, existing research has not kept pace and could benefit from an understanding of the different types of motivations that prompt
consumers to post online reviews. To better understand online posting motives, the study first asks:

*RQ1: What motives are displayed by consumers’ who post online product or service reviews?*

The identified motives will be used to create and validate the Online Review Posting (ORP) scale, which is simply an inventory of online posting motives.

Consumer motives and attitudes toward advertising have been used to make predictions about consumers’ behavior toward products, services, and companies. eWOM is a form of advertising (Chen & Rodgers, 2006) that is not well understood in terms of consumer motives and attitudes. To better understand consumer motives and attitudes as they relate to eWOM, this study seeks to examine the relationship between eWOM motives (i.e., online review posting motives) and consumers’ attitudes toward eWOM and online reviews. This examination will also serve the purpose of helping to validate the ORP scale. In order to explore this relationship the study asks:

*RQ2a: What motives predict consumers’ attitudes toward eWOM.*

*RQ2b. What motives predict consumers’ attitudes toward online product and service reviews?*

As noted, RQ2a and RQ2b test the validity of the Online Posting Review (ORP) scale, which was developed from RQ1, in that the questions link the identified posting motives to consumer attitudes and behavior. Rodgers and Thorson (2000), in their description of the Interactive Advertising Model (IAM), outline motive identification as the essential first step to understanding how consumers process and feel about specific online content.
Consumers who post online more frequently are presumed to have different motivations for posting online than those who post less frequently. For example, Goldsmith and Horowitz (2006) identified a positive relationship between consumers who were motivated to seek opinions online and the amount of online purchases made by consumers who were motivated to seek opinions online. This is most likely due to the fact that consumers who seek reviews online spend a significant amount of time online, are comfortable interacting online, and are therefore more inclined to make online purchases. In line with this logic, RQ2c and RQ2d were proposed to explore the relationship between online posting motives and the frequency of posting as well as reading online reviews. Specifically, the study asks:

*RQ2c. What is the relationship between motives and frequency of posting online product or service reviews?*

*RQ2d: What is the relationship between motives and frequency of reading online product or service reviews?*

While earlier studies are useful for building a foundation of “macro” Internet motivations, such as Rodgers and Sheldon’s (2002) Web Motivation Inventory (WMI), it is also important to understand “micro” motives that go along with different aspects of the Internet, and the relationship between the general and specific online motivations. It is essential to understand the theoretical (cognitive and behavioral) contributions of macro and micro-level motives for the Internet. This leads to the third and final research question:
**RQ3:** *What is the relationship between the ORP and the WMI? What are the similarities and differences between the measures?*

Comparing the ORP and the WMI serves as a test of convergent validity, as the WMI has shown to be both valid and reliable.
Functionalism and the Interactive Advertising Model

Functionalism serves as the overarching school of thought for the current study as it helps explain the motivational basis of individuals’ needs. Central to this approach is the belief that “behavior is best understood in terms of the goals and needs it serves” (Copper, Shapiro, & Powers, 1998, p. 1529). That is, in order to understand individuals’ online behavior one must first understand the need that drove them to use the Internet, and the function the Internet serves. Under this school of thought, behavior is initiated with some specific goal in mind. Hawkins, Best, and Coney (2004) state that motivations are the reasons for behavior. Goldsmith and Horowitz (2006) further explain, “any study of an aspect of consumer behavior, such as online word-of-mouth, would be incomplete without accounting for the reasons it occurs” (p. 6).

In their Interactive Advertising Model (IAM), Rodgers and Thorson (2000) contend a measure of motivations as the essential first step toward understanding consumers’ behavior. The IAM is best understood by separating it into three distinct phases, some that are consumer-controlled, and others that are advertiser-controlled. As stated, the initial step is to identify consumers’ motivations, and to understand the cognitive tools used by consumers when interacting with advertisements. Understanding the consumers’ motives and information processes (consumer-controlled) provides insights into which types of advertisements (advertiser-controlled) will prompt certain responses, such as clicking on an advertisement or purchasing a product (consumer-controlled). The current study seeks to understand the variety of motives that prompt
specific online behavior (i.e., posting online reviews). In their implementation of the
IAM, Rodgers and Sheldon (2002) were able to link motives to access the Internet to
individuals’ behavior and attitudes toward advertisements. Rodgers and Sheldon
predicted banner advertisement effectiveness by identifying the motivation for which the
individual accessed the Internet. Rodgers and Sheldon later describe this concept as the
“matching hypothesis,” in that advertisements that match the individual’s motive are
more persuasive. The current study seeks to explore this concept through the examination
of the relationship between eWOM motives (i.e., online posting motives) and consumer
attitudes toward eWOM and their online behavior.

Motives

Rodgers and Thorson (2002) define motives as inner desires to actively fulfill a
need or want (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). Therefore, an Internet
motive is an inner drive to complete an activity on the Internet. Based on this definition,
the present study defines online posting motives as inner drives to create content about a
product or service in the form of eWOM, specifically an online review. The
conceptualization of the term motivation is often difficult because research in
psychology, sociology, and mass communication often use the words motive, need, and
function interchangeably. Although motive, need, and function have different meanings,
they all work to understand the same end or outcome, which is consumer behavior. It is,
however, important to provide a distinction among terms for clarity purposes. A
sequential explanation highlights the steps an individual goes through when using the
Internet, and provides a distinction between the individual’s need, motive, and the
function the Internet serves. First, an individual user possesses a need. The individual
then becomes motivated and takes action to satisfy his/her need by accessing a specific function of the Internet. Inherent in this explanation, as well as the definition of motive, is the importance of an active audience.

**Active Audience**

As is often not the case in traditional forms of media, such as television and radio, the active audience assumption is appropriate for the Internet. Rubin (1984) explains that audience activity is variable, not absolute as once was assumed. Audiences are not completely passive or active; their level of activity depends on external factors. In essence, different individuals display different amounts of activity in different communication settings and at different times. A high level of audience activity is assumed for Internet use, and is accepted among scholars in the mass communication, business, and psychology fields.

In relation to the current study, individuals actively contribute when they create content pertaining to a product or service and post it online. Individuals also actively consume information as they browse the multitude of websites available on the Internet. One of the strengths of the Internet is its interactivity; therefore an approach that contains audience activity as a core concept is “regarded as one of the most effective conceptual basis to study this medium” (Siraj, 2007, p. 403). The active audience assumption is one of the five basic assumptions of the U&G theory.

**Uses and Gratifications Theory**

Recent studies using the U&G paradigm are key to understanding identified Internet motives and the literature surrounding product and service reviews. U&G research has helped to explain the reasons why individuals engage in certain types of
mediated communication via social media, company websites, community bulletin boards, etc. Siraj (2007) highlights the three main objectives of the U&G theory. He states,

First, UGT attempts to explain how specific viewers use mass media to meet individual needs. Second, researchers endeavor to discover a viewer’s underlying motives for using media. Finally, theorists want to identify the positive and negative consequences of an individual’s mass media utilization” (Siraj, 2007, p. 399).

RQ2 addresses the positive and negative consequences of consumers’ Internet use as it tests the relationship between posting motives and attitudes toward eWOM and online reviews.

Ruggiero (2000) outlines the turbulent history of the U&G theory in his paper, “Uses and Gratifications Theory in the 21st Century.” He explains that the approach actually emerged in the late 1920s under the Payne Fund Studies, which sought to understand how movie viewing was affecting the youth of America (Lowry & Defleur, 1983). Early U&G studies, however, failed to identify interrelations among media functions. Initial research studies did not link media effects to an original need or motive. Studies were primarily descriptive, and simply classified participant responses into varying effect categories. Elihu Katz (1959) is often cited as the first to denote and employ the U&G theory. Katz questioned what individuals do with mass media rather than what mass media do to people, marking a transition from a media effects focus to a uses and gratifications focus. Katz explained that the theory should focus on what
purposes or functions the media serve for a body of receivers rather than attend to the
direct impact and effect of media use. The current study exemplifies this notion by
placing the focus on identifying motives to post rather than the impact reviews have on
sales. The majority of the literature that deals with online reviews focuses on the effect
product or service reviews have on purchase intent. While an understanding of this
relationship is a necessity for companies, it is also necessary for companies to understand
the consumers who are posting the reviews that other consumers read and take into
account when making purchases. Companies cannot directly control consumers’ actions,
but they can have a greater influence if they gain a better understanding of their
consumers’ motives and thought processes.

The U&G theory is criticized for lacking a common model or set of procedures
despite the attempts made by Katz, Gurevitch, and Hass (1973). Katz et al. identified
need typologies that were fulfilled by all media. Ruggiero (2000), Siraj (2007),
Papacharissi and Rubin (2000), and a number of scholars feel the U&G theory is
continually developing in order to address criticisms, and to better understand
individuals’ needs and motivations given the changing dynamics of society and emerging
media. The emergence of the Internet has provided a resurgence of the U&G theory by
enabling new, diverse research opportunities. The global reach of the Internet provides
access to billions of individuals, resulting in not only larger, more diverse samples, but
also more inclusive samples. U&G studies completed via the Internet further combat the
long held criticism surrounding individualized study results, because of the Internet’s
reach and greater ability to provide generalizable findings. The U&G approach provides
in-depth theoretical support to the examination of the relationship between Internet
motives and attitudes toward eWOM and online reviews. Researchers, specifically those who study Internet motives, rely on the U&G theory to inform research procedure and analyze the results.

**Internet Motives**

While the Internet’s convergence of traditional mediums provides nearly endless opportunities for research, it also poses a challenge to uncover and understand new media needs. The Internet is a mass medium in that it can reach billions of people, but is unique in that it also enables interpersonal, one-to-one, communication. The Internet serves as a continuum between the two types of communication, which has allowed research to expand to include a series of psychological and sociological motives associated with UGC and computer-mediated communication (CMC) in general. A survey of the literature reveals hundreds of motivations to engage with media, but for the purpose of the current research the literature review is limited to the Internet.

Under the functionalist paradigm, Rodgers and Sheldon (2002) developed the Web Motivation Inventory (WMI) to assess four primary motives that continued to resurface during their analysis: information, communication, surfing, and shopping. Using the web to acquire information (i.e., research) is one of the most common, if not the most common, motive reported throughout literature (Eighmey, 1997; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Ruggiero, 2000; Sun, 2008; Chua, Goh, & Lee, 2008; Armstrong, & McAdams, 2011; Hollenbaugh, 2011; Rodgers & Chen, 2005). Communication, often labeled as socialization or social interaction, is much more prevalent in media research since the emergence of the Internet due to the Internet’s interactivity and ability to foster mass communication, as well as interpersonal communication. The shopping motive
often surfaces in studies analyzing consumer reviews and purchase intent or sales
(Dellarocas, Gao, & Narayan, 2010; Li, Hitt, & Zhang, 2011; Godes & Mayzlin, 2004).

Surfing, perhaps the least common motive included in the WMI, is defined as an
“activity of traveling around cyberspace with no particular goal in mind” (p. 87).
Eighmey (1997) in his analysis of commercial websites, referred to surfing as simply
exploring the web. Younger generations tend to call this behavior browsing. Millennials
browse the web often, jumping from email to social media, to news sources, etc. Rodgers
and Thorson (2000) account for this movement in their Interactive Advertising Model
(IAM). They discuss the concept of motive-switching, explaining that consumers access
the Internet to fulfill a variety of goals, and that throughout the course of carrying out one
motive, they “switch motives perhaps because they became bored or frustrated with the
initial motive, or because some other activity captured their attention” (p. 46). In relation
to this study, a consumer’s motive to post a product or service review online may or may
not be the initial motive driving Internet use.

The 12-item WMI was replicated in the current study, and was disseminated
along with the 39-item Online Review Posting (ORP) scale, which will be discussed in
detail in the methods section. The WMI was chosen for the current study, because it
possesses reliability, validity, and stability. The WMI has been replicated across time,
and on different samples of individuals from multiple countries. For example, Rodgers,
Jin, Rettie, Alpert, and Yoon (2005) replicated the WMI in non-U.S. countries to detect
differences in Internet motives among countries. The study examined the United States,
United Kingdom, Australia, and South Korea. Results indicated that the four primary
m motives outlined in the United States consumer research hold true for other countries.
The study also referenced an additional motivation area, entertainment, specifically online gaming, suggesting that additional Internet motives will surface as technology changes. It is for this reason that the current study hopes to understand and identify micro motives, specific to online posting, in addition to macro Internet motives, generally about Internet use. Micro motives provide a closer look at one of the many functions of the Internet.

Transitioning to the U&G literature, Papacharissi and Rubin’s (2000) results yielded five interpretable factors: interpersonal utility, information seeking, convenience, and entertainment. While information seeking was the most salient motive, Papacharissi and Rubin’s analysis of interpersonal motives is imperative. They used the interpersonal motives scale outlined by Flaherty, Pearce, and Rubin (1998), which included a range of motives (inclusion, affection, social interaction, expressive need, surveillance) that when combined create the overarching factor, interpersonal utility. The interpersonal motive is very relevant to a study addressing posting motives, because online product and service reviews have emerged as a prominent way consumers interact with each other and share information. Flaherty et al. found that CMC channels are not functional alternatives for face-to-face channels for most interpersonal needs. Rubin and Papcharissi expanded on Flaherty et al.’s results, indicating that individuals who were motivated to use the Internet for interpersonal communication were less satisfied and felt less valued in their face-to-face communication. That being said, the nature of online reviews are often personal. Product and service reviews include details that are specific to the creator and his/her opinions or experience. While individuals may not develop a relationship with other reviewers that is equal to their relationships offline, more recent research has found that
they do not differentiate between product and service information available online and that which is discussed in person (Hardey, 2011). Hardey found that consumers no longer differentiate between online and offline content. A review posted online is perceived as credible as a review exchanged in a face-to-face conversation.

Ruggiero (2000) includes a number of the motives identified by Rubin and associates in his analysis of Internet motives. He lists, motives such as social identity, interpersonal communication, parasocial interaction, companionship, escape, entertainment, and surveillance. Ruggiero (2000) identified a social identity motive, and Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) identified an impression management motive, both of which are associated with an individual’s online self-presentation. Social identity is an established psychological theory and an emerging motivation, especially in research concerning social media networks, online dating, and second life. Social identity theory analyzes the influence of group membership on individual actions. Oftentimes individuals alter their online persona and profile to be more appealing to their perceived audience, i.e., their group of friends, potential partners. This action is called impression management. Self-presentation theory analyzes this behavior, suggesting individuals are motivated to manage their image in order to present favorable and appropriate images to others (Walther, 2007). Given the interpersonal aspect of the Internet and the ability for individuals to manipulate content, self-presentation techniques are of growing interest to researchers hoping to better understand Internet motives, as well as posting motives.

Social identity theory and self-presentation theory provide theoretical support to studies analyzing UGC (Moe & Trusov, 2011; Schlosser, 2005; Naylor, Lamberton, & Norton, 2011; Walther, 2007; Toma, Hancock, & Ellison, 2008, Wang, Walther,
Hancock, 2009). For example, Walther (2007) successfully captured participant’s self-presentation strategies in his study, “Selective self-presentation in computer-mediated communication: Hyperpersonal dimensions of technology, language, and cognition.” Walther analyzed content created by consumers, taking into account composition time, editing behavior, and language differences. He found that content differed depending on the target of the message, i.e., who the participants believed they were communicating with, and that participants edited the content more when “writing to more desirable targets” (p. 2550). Toma, Hancock, and Ellison (2012) analyzed the accuracy of online dating profiles, asking participants to rate the accuracy of their online self-presentation. The study found that deception was frequently observed, “Approximately 8 of 10 (81%) of the participants lied on at least one of the observed characteristics” (p. 1032). Toma et al.’s participants edited their online content to appear more attractive to perspective matches. It is clear that care is exercised when publishing content online. Nezlek and Leary (2002) developed a self-presentational motives scale in their study, “Individual Differences in Self-Presentational Motives in Daily Social Interaction.” A few of the scale items were included as part of the ORP in survey administration, as the current study seeks to understand the relationship between self-presentation motives and online reviews.

Prominence of eWOM and UGC

Companies’ relationships with consumers have drastically changed as a result of UGC, specifically product and service reviews. Prevalent not only in academic literature, but also in industry analysis is the discussion about the inclusion of word-of-mouth (WOM) in the traditional marketing mix (Chen & Xie, 2008; Yubo & Jinhang, 2008).
Scholars and practitioners alike, discuss the emergence of eWOM and its implications on the path to purchase. Chen and Xie (2008) stated, “product information created by users based on personal usage experience, can serve as a new element in the marketing mix and work as free “sales assistants” to help consumers identify the products that best match their idiosyncratic usage conditions” (p. 477). As Hardey (2011) noted, consumers trust the content posted by other consumers online, specially their peers. Consumers’ attitudes toward companies are influenced by content posted by other consumers. Lecinski (2011) explains that the Internet allows individuals access to endless amounts of information, including access to other users with similar abstract ideas. While consumers may be prone to engage in conversations about products and services they are interested in purchasing, they are also surrounded by a multitude of online product and service related conversations, which inevitably influences their attitudes and purchase behavior.

Walther (2007) explains that some individuals now “develop relationships by relying on typed messages as the primary mechanism of expression” (p. 2539). Social media, weblogs, online communities, and consumer review websites rely on the typed messages and interactions of their users. These outlets survive because of UGC. The emergence of UGC and digital conversations, has only increased the power individual consumers possess. Consumers can read, write, and disseminate content on a much larger scale as a result of the Internet, thus an analysis of user motivations, specifically content creation motivations, is of increased importance now more than ever. Research on commenting, while largely limited to an analysis of news content, illustrates the growing power of UGC. Readers play a much larger and more influential role in news content
than ever before, community engagement has expanded at great lengths given the interactivity of the Internet.

Boczkowski and Mitchelstein (2012) examined three different interactive features that are available on leading U.S. online new sites - clicks, e-mails, and comments. Similar to online reviews, “commenting on stories comprises communication within a larger network of unknown people” (Boczkowski & Mitchelstein, 2012, p. 3). Content creators, i.e., journalists and readers who comment, may not know the people they are interacting with, but their content is still influential. Both the online review literature and commenting literature discuss the difference between professional content and user-generated content. In line with previous research, Cheong and Morrison (2008) found that the context in which word of mouth appears influences perceived effectiveness, “noting that a consumer’s opinion is more credible than an advertiser’s positive words, because the consumer has nothing to gain by posting the comments”(p. 44). Similarly, Benlian, Titah, and Hess (2012) found that consumers place more trust in consumer reviews than provider recommendations.

Motivations to Engage in CMC and Create UGC

The interpersonal and interactive aspect the Internet allows for the analysis of specific motives and posting habits. Examining UGC from a U&G perspective, Hollenbaugh (2011) explored motivations to maintain a personal blog. Results showed six main motivations: helping/informing, social connection, pass-time, exhibitionism, archiving/organizing, and professionalism. Hollenbaugh’s study identified two motives not prevalent in previous posting literature, exhibitionism and archiving/organizing. Individuals who “scored high on exhibitionism blogged for attention, to gain fame, and
because they thought people liked to read things about them…blogging for archiving/organizing included blogging to record thoughts and feelings, and to read what was written in previous posts” (p. 16). Exhibitionism and archiving/organizing are motives that hold true for social media as well. Smock, Ellison, Lampe, and Wohn (2011) identified similar motives in their analysis of motivations for specific Facebook features. They found nine factors: expressive information sharing, relaxing entertainment, escapism, cool and new trend, companionship, professional advancement, social interaction, habitual pass time, and to meet new people. While motives for each specific site feature varied, social interaction positively predicted all but one of Facebook’s features. The status update feature was solely predicted by the motive, expressive information sharing. While Baek, Holton, Harp, and Yaschur (2011) identified many of the motives cited by Hollenbaugh and Smock et al., they also identified a control factor. Their participants cited “because I want someone to do something for me” and “to tell others what to do” as reasons for posting links on Facebook.

Chen (2011) looked more specifically at the social interaction motive as she explored Twitter, and whether active Twitter use would be the strongest predictor of individuals’ need to connect with other people on Twitter. Her results supported her hypothesis, which stated that those users who seek out Twitter most actively would gratify a need to connect with others on Twitter to a greater extent than other users (p. 759). Rodgers and Chen (2005) also found a relationship between frequency of posting and gratifications received. Their research examined the psychosocial motivations and benefits of a breast cancer Internet community group and found, “The more a woman posted to the discussion board, the greater improvement was shown in her mood”
In line with previous research, the current study seeks to understand the relationship between identified posting motives and the amount of posting. The research explores whether different motives result in different amounts of online review posting.

Although an examination of online product reviews should not be limited to sales, the vast majority of the literature seeks to understand this relationship. According to Dellarocas, Gao, and Narayan (2010), “Most prior academic research on this topic has concentrated on assessing the relationship between consumer-generated content and product sales” (p. 129). For example, Li, Hitt, and Zhang (2011) examined how information provided by online reviews influences firms’ pricing strategy for repeat purchase products. Godes and Mayzlin (2004) measured dispersion in addition to their analysis of the life-cycle of the product, and Zhao and Jinhong (2011) demonstrated the time-contingent effect of a review. While more recent studies have differentiated between consumer reviews, provider recommendations, and online feedback systems to better analyze the effects of various online reviews (Dellarocas, 2003; Benlian, Titah, & Hess, 2012, Boczkowski & Mitchelstein, 2012) few studies have differentiated between motives to post online reviews and motives to read online reviews. Chua, Goh, and Lee (2011) are one of the few scholars who assessed the difference between contribution and retrieval motives. They found that entertainment and convenience motives predicted contribution, while information seeking predicted content retrieval in their study of MobiTOP, a mobile content sharing application.

The current study’s goal is to advance research by filling a gap in the literature that has resulted due to an emphasis on sales and reading reviews. Little research has
been done in attempt to analyze the motivations to post a review online. As U&G
denotes, a measure of motivations is an essential first step toward understanding
individuals’ online behavior. The current study will address this gap by understanding the
viewpoints of individuals who post product and service reviews, those who create the
content consumers read. Content creators impact the opinions and preferences of their
followers and those who read their posts. Content creators are important to companies
seeking to gain insight into the minds of their consumers, and to understand the
conversation surrounding their products and services. Phase one of the current study,
which will be outlined in the following methods section, addresses RQ1 through in-depth
interviews with consumers who post product and service reviews. RQ2 and RQ3 are
addressed through an analysis of survey data, which includes participant’s responses to
the ORP scale, the WMI, and the attitudinal and behavioral items.
Ch. 2 METHODS

Mixed Method Study

Two different methods, i.e., a mixed method, were used to examine the research questions. The mixed method design is rooted in psychology. Campbell and Fiske (1959) are credited with the inception of the mixed methods design (Creswell, 2009). The researcher chose to employ a mixed method design in order to use one approach to better understand the second approach. For the current study, the qualitative findings were used to create the quantitative measure. The first method employed was qualitative interviews. The study explored micro-motives for posting online product reviews, which addressed RQ1. RQ2 and RQ3 were addressed with an online survey, developed from the results of the in-depth interviews, and combined with prior attitudinal, behavioral, and Internet motives scales, specifically, the WMI (Rodgers & Sheldon, 2002).

The research was broken down into two phases. Phase one gathered qualitative data on individuals’ motivations for posting online product and service reviews through in-depth interviews. A sequential transformative strategy was used, in that the results gleaned from Phase one were used in Phase two to develop the items that comprised the ‘inventory’ of online posting motivations, the Online Review Posting (ORP) scale (Creswell, 2009). In Phase two a survey was administered. The survey included the WMI, the ORP scale, and attitudinal and behavioral items to address RQ2. Phase two also compared macro Internet motives (WMI) and micro posting motives (ORP) to address RQ3, specifically. The use of triangulation allowed the exploratory qualitative work to help frame the content in the quantitative method. Individuals were sampled
based on key criteria listed below, under Phase one sampling. Samples for both methods
drew from a population of students at a large Mid-western university.

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Phase I: In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted in Phase one. In-depth, semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to moderate the discussion and to uncover new motivations not already present in the literature. Structured interviews or quantitative methods, such as a survey, limit the participants’ responses by providing finite options for responses (Fontana & Frey, 1994). The open-ended nature of semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to probe the participants for further explanation and steer the conversation to an interesting topic or motive discussed by earlier participants. Focus groups were not used for this specific reason. During focus groups the moderator has to facilitate conversation among participants, but is largely absent from the conversation (Berg, 2009).

Phase I Sampling

A total of 12 participants were interviewed. Participants were selected through a convenience sample of students currently enrolled at a large Mid-western university. The selection criterion for participants was very simple. Participants had to be users of the Internet, and have interacted with other users through content contribution, specifically the creation of product or service reviews. For the vast majority of students, this twofold selection criterion is a part of their everyday life. For example, students log in to social media websites multiple times per day to write on a friend’s wall, tweet about an experience, etc. Extra care was exercised to ensure selection of students who post product or service reviews online and engage with others. Participants were recruited from on-campus courses and through e-mail list serves. Participation in the study was voluntary.
Typically students’ age places them in the Millennial Generation. The Millennial Generation encompasses individuals of approximately 18 to 30 years of age. According to Pew Research Center, in comparison to other generations, Millennials are more ethnically and racially diverse, and less religious. They are optimistic about their future job opportunities and economic success, despite struggling to find jobs in the midst of the recession. Millennials are confident, and this confidence allows them to be self-expressive. “Three-quarters have created a profile on a social networking site. One-in-five have posted a video of themselves online” (Pew Research Center, 2010). Millennials’ self-expression and technological know-how place many of them in Generation C (Trendwatching.com, 2004). While not a traditional generation defined by dates, Generation C is defined by specific characteristics. Generation C received its name as a result of the phenomenon of UGC. The “C” in Generation C stands for content. Individuals within this generation express their creativity through the content they create and post online. Members of this generation remain connected, through various devices, to the Internet where they share information and receive instant updates (Hardey, 2011). Thus, a convenience sample of students at a large Mid-western university provides an appropriate sample for uncovering motivations to post product reviews online.

It is also important to note the limitations associated with a student sample. Due to Millennials, specifically college educated Millennials, technological comfort and digital presence the identified posting motives may not hold true for the larger population. Additional motives may emerge if the ORP scale is replicated using a different sample. For example, different motives may emerge if the current study was replicated in a different geographic area or with Millennials who are not students.
Phase I Research Instrument

The in-depth, semi-structured interviews followed a discussion guide, but were not limited in order to capture specific responses. Instead the information gathered was viewed as an attempt to understand the breadth of reasons for posting consumer reviews online. Qualitative research is emergent in nature, thus the questions proposed by the researcher deviated slightly from the initial discussion guide and changed depending on the participants and their responses during the interview. Interviews provide the researcher with control over the line of questioning, and therefore enabled the researcher to address RQ1 thoroughly by probing participants for detail and insight into their individual motivations for posting online reviews. Participants provided verbal consent to have their interviews recorded via an audio recorder. Each interview was transcribed at a later date for data analysis purposes. The researcher also took notes throughout the interviews in the event that the audio recorder did not effectively record the conversation.

Initial questions were exploratory in nature, such as, “Think back to the last time you posted a review about a product online. When was this? Talk me through what you did when you posted the content about the product? Was it a positive/negative review?” The researcher then probed the participants for further details, “When/where/about what did you post? Describe the content of your post.” Later questions sought to uncover individuals’ specific motivations, “Why did you post the review? What, specifically, were the reasons you posted the review? Etc.” Projective techniques were also used to uncover motivations for posting online product and service reviews that were not top of mind for participants. For participants who had trouble recalling specific experience about a time when they posted an online review about a product or service, scenarios
were presented to get the wheels turning. For example, the researcher proposed the following scenarios, “Imagine you buy a camera and you find the quality of the photos to be subpar, what do you do - why?” “Imagine you are really interested in a new product and you post – why?” Please see appendix 1 for the complete discussion guide.

**Phase I Data Analysis**

Data resulting from the in-depth interviews was qualitatively analyzed for the purpose of creating the ORP scale, which was used in Phase two of this research. The constant comparative technique was implemented to analyze the qualitative data. The researcher followed the four steps outlined by Wimmer and Dominick (2011). After collecting the data, the researcher completed the comparative assignment of incidents to categories, placing each unit of analysis into a set of provisional categories. Throughout this process the researcher continually refined the categories, and searched for relationships among the categories (p. 120). As a final step, the researcher provided an explanation for the phenomenon being studied. For the purposes of this research, the final step was to distill motives identified in the categories to be included in the ORP scale. Category motives were synthesized to form specific items for the quantitative measure.

Items identified in previous literature were reviewed, and those that were also supported by the qualitative findings were included in the ORP scale. The ORP scale consists of 39 items, which address the identified motives to post consumer reviews online. The motivations identified in Phase one (qualitative) of the research design provided answers to RQ1. Phase two used the ORP scale in survey research to address RQ2 and RQ3, and enabled quantitative examination of the new scale’s validity and reliability.
Phase II: Pre-test Survey

A cross-sectional pre-test survey was administered in Phase two of the mixed method research design. A cross-sectional survey collects data at only one point in time. The purpose of the pre-test was to identify the strongest motives for posting online product and service reviews. The pre-test also served as a preliminary indicator of the relationship between identified motives and online attitudes and behavior, and the WMI.

Phase II: Final Survey

Following the pre-test, a final cross-sectional survey was administered in Phase two. The purpose of the survey was to enable inferences to be made about specific motives to post product reviews online, the relationship between identified posting motives, general Internet motives, consumers’ posting behavior, and their attitudes toward eWOM and online reviews. The quick turn around of survey design is advantageous when completing mixed method research, as mixed method research tends to be more time consuming given the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Phase II Sampling

Sample size is often determined by the margin of error the researcher will tolerate. For the purposes of this study a margin of error of 5% was accepted. This study used a convenience sample of students at a large Mid-western university. Due to the use of a convenience sample, sampling error cannot be calculated. Sampling error can only be calculated in probability samples, and a convenience sample is a non-probability sample. Consistent with Rodgers and Sheldon (2002), the survey was administered to 115 undergraduate students (see Babbie, 1990, Fowler, 2000).
Similar to the Phase one sampling procedure, participants were students currently enrolled at a large Mid-western university. Students who agreed to participate in the survey were members of the Millennial generation, and a large number of the students can also be classified as members of Generation C, which is defined by content creation. Please see the Phase I Sampling section for a more detailed summary of participants.

Phase II Research Instrument

The survey was administered online. An online survey tool, Qualtrics, was used to gather survey results. The use of an online survey tool allowed the researcher to easily download results into the SPSS database for further analysis. The identity of each participant was kept anonymous and participation was confidential. Demographic questions were provided to categorize responses. The ORP 39-item scale was combined with the WMI 12-item scale, and attitudinal and behavior items to produce a survey that consisted of 65 items in addition to demographic questions. The ORP scale was administered via a survey in order to quantitatively analyze the identified posting motives.

Measurement Items

Online Review Posting (ORP) Scale.

The first set of survey questions consisted of the 39-item ORP scale. The ORP scale is an instrument designed specifically for this research. The researcher analyzed previous scale questions addressing Internet and website motives and use (Rodgers & Sheldon, 2002; Eighmey, 1997; Chua, Goh, & Lee, 2011; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Hammond, McWilliam, & Diaz, 1998; Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999), questions addressing social media motives and use (Smock, Ellison, Lampe, & Wohn, 2011; Ellison,
Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Oeldorf-Hirsch & Sundar, 2010; Chen, 2011; Baek, Holton, Harp, & Yaschur, 2011), and questions addressing self-presentational motives (Nezlek & Leary, 2002). Multiple items identified in the literature also emerged from the qualitative findings and were therefore included in the final ORP scale. For example, two self-presentational motives identified by Nezlek and Leary (2002), *I want to be seen as likable* and *I want to be seen as attractive*, were included in the ORP scale in addition to the three self-presentation motives, *I want to be perceived as intelligent*, *I want to appear cool*, and *I want to appear in the know*, which were derived from the qualitative findings.

**Web Motivation Inventory (WMI) Scale.**

The second set of survey questions consisted of the 12-item WMI scale. The WMI scale was chosen for this research because it has been replicated over time and tested on multiple samples including, students and non-students samples, and US and non-US samples. Although a few differences have surfaced, the authors report measures of internal consistency. The replication of WMI across time and samples demonstrate the scale’s validity and reliability. The scale is also easy to administer, taking less than five minutes to complete, and focuses solely on reasons for web use (Rodgers & Sheldon, 2002). The WMI scale explores four primary motives for the Internet: research, communicate, shop and surf. Three items comprise each the four motives in order to better assess the underlying Internet motive. For example, listed under the shop motive are the following three statements, “I use to web to: make a purchase (1), buy things (2), and purchase a product I’ve heard about (3).” A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the participants’ responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). For the complete scale please see appendix 4.
Rodgers and Sheldon (2002) explain that the mixing of motives and benefits (i.e., uses and gratifications) dilute the predictive abilities of the scale; hence, they chose to focus on motives independently of benefits. The same holds true for the ORP scale. The ORP scale only measures motives to post; however, the current study does address gratifications by testing the predictive abilities of the motives to impact consumers’ attitudes toward eWOM and online reviews.

**Attitudinal and Behavioral Items.**

The third set of survey questions consisted of items that addressed the participants’ attitudes toward eWOM and online product and service reviews, and their posting behavior. Items were derived from Fakharyan, Jalilvand, Elyasi, and Mohammadi (2012), MacKenzie and Lutz (1989), and Goldsmith and Horowitz (2006). Fakharyan, Jalilvand et al. examined the causal relationship among eWOM, tourists’ attitudes toward Islamic destinations, and travel intention. Their attitude scale was used in the current study; however, items were altered to reflect online reviews as opposed to travel destinations. MacKenzie and Lutz’s famous attitudinal scale was also used to measure participants’ attitudes toward eWOM.

Items in this section also measured the amount of posting online reviews, i.e., the behavioral aspects of eWOM. Goldsmith and Horowitz’s (2006) “Amount of Purchasing” scale was included in the survey. Several alterations were made by the researcher to account for online posting of product or service reviews, in order to fill the gap in the literature that currently focuses on reading (as opposed to posting) online product reviews and product purchases. For complete scales please see appendices 5 and 6.
Ch. 4 RESULTS

Phase I: In-depth Interviews

After completing constant comparative analysis, nine categories emerged and 39 posting motives were identified. Many of the posting motives identified from the in-depth interviews were in line with previous online posting motives identified in the literature. Please see the appendix 2 for the full list of motives, i.e., the Online Review Posting (ORP) scale.

Category one, titled audience concern, explores participants tailoring of review content to specific outlets and specific audiences. Participants considered their audiences before posting a review, seeking to please their audience, and ideally receive a response or interaction. In reference to posting product and service information on social media a participant stated, “I use it to connect with other people, and if I don’t think it’s something where I can connect with other people I will keep it to myself.” Another participant explained that she enjoyed posting reviews on Facebook, “I like to be able to introduce my friends and family to something new.” The researcher identified the following two motives, I post to connect with my family and friends and I post to connect with many people at once. Participants were motivated to share content of interest to them or those they were connecting with, i.e., I post to share information about a special interest, I post to share information about a common interest, I post to share information about a product or service I am passionate about. Self-presentation motives also emerged as a result of audience concern, i.e., I want to be perceived as likable, I want to be perceived as positive. One participant expressed her concern for her online
presentation, “I want to make sure everything that is out there is going to please people, and not be a negative reflection of me.”

Participants saw the content they posted as digital reflections of themselves. Category two concerned participants’ online identity. Participants edited content to project a certain online image. A participant outlined this concept with her reasoning for posting a review about quinoa, “With posting about quinoa on Facebook, I was wanted to show how good I am doing. I am proud of myself for actually cooking a meal and not just making a sandwich. I am exploring and trying different options. I think part of it too was, look how cool I am…trying something new, stepping out of the box.” Other participants were more direct in their explanation; “I want to sound as articulate as possible, because I feel my opinion is worth something.” Multiple self-presentation motives were derived from this category, i.e., *I want to be seen as intelligent, I want to be seen as attractive, I want to appear cool, I want to appear in the know.* For some participants, an online review was a form of self-expression, “It (the review) is an extension of yourself…I am doing it to express who I am.” As a result, motives that embodied self-expression were included in the ORP. Motive such as, *I post to express myself, I post to express my excitement, I post to express my disappointment/frustration.*

Participants wanted their opinions to be heard, and felt that in order to adequately express themselves they needed to chose their outlet wisely, and be mindful of the content they created. Category three analyzed content differences amongst the various outlets available via the Internet. Categories four and five dealt with participants’ fear of negativity and their dismissal of reviews. Participants dismissed reviews that were extremely negative and provided no rationale, and reviews that contained grammar or
spelling errors. As a result, they did not post extremely negative content for fear of being viewed as a negative person or being dismissed, “I didn’t want to make it too mean, such that if someone from the restaurant was reading they would get defensive about it.”

Participants were concerned about expressing their opinion, i.e., *I post to express myself*, *I post to share my opinion*, but were also concerned about maintaining a positive online identity, i.e., *I want to be perceived as positive*, *I want to be perceived as likable*.

Participants were also mindful of the timeliness of their content. Category six analyzed the impact time had on product and service reviews. In line with category three, participants did not want to post about a product or service that had already been talked about by others on social media outlets, “The train has already passed on this one;” however, they would post similar content on review websites in order to make the rating more accurate. When considering their post, participants kept in mind that they consider both the quantity (number of reviews) and quality of reviews for products and services.

An interesting motive prompting participants to post was; *I post to make a review rating more accurate*. It is also important to note that participants felt as though they needed to have a significant amount of knowledge about a product or service in order to write a review, “I wouldn’t go to a restaurant one time and write a review.” A main motive that emerged from the qualitative data was participants’ desire to help others, i.e., *I post to help others*, *I post to help people like me*, *I post to share information that might be of use to others*, *I post to help those less knowledgeable*. Participants felt that in order to adequately help other consumers, a certain amount of knowledge about the product or service was necessary.
Category seven analyzed the relationship between price and posting online product and service reviews. Helping motives were stronger for product and services with a higher price point. Common posting motives such as, *I post to provide information* and *I post to share my opinion* were also heightened for product or services that were more expensive, and for product and services that were important to the consumer writing the post, as was seen in category one. While participants were hesitant to post negative reviews, they did discuss their desire to warn other consumers of repeating their purchase mistakes, i.e., *I post to inform others of an issue or problem.* This was the only topic of discussion where consumers acknowledged their desire to control other consumers’ purchases, i.e., *I post to tell others what to do.*

Lastly, and arguably the most important finding for practitioners and companies, is that participants appreciated any form of response, whether it was a comment on their review, a “like”, or a “retweet.” Category eight analyzed participants’ motives that were driven by their desire for interaction. Motives such as, *I post to get something in return,* *I post to get a response,* *I post to receive a promotion,* *I post to get feedback.* In reference to a review on Facebook a participant explained, “Clicking the “like” button is a small burst of affirmation.” The contrary, however, holds true. When participants did not receive a response, they tended to find the experience discouraging stating, “Why does no one care?” and “This is so embarrassing.” This was especially true for social media outlets. Some participants went back and deleted posts that no one responded to, “I would probably delete it. I am not going to lie. If I were to post and no one got a kick out of it or liked it, I would delete it. Otherwise it is an awkward post on your wall and it’s going to be on there for forever.”
Participants were looking for a response from other people and companies alike. Category nine analyzed participants’ feelings toward interacting with companies. When asked how she would feel if a company responded to her review one participant stated, “I would definitely have more respect for them. The fact that they took the time to find my seemingly inconsequential post about something and respond back to me really says a lot about their commitment to the customer.” Another participant stated, “It would humanize the brand, because I would know there is a person on the other side.” Participants were looking to connect with companies online, i.e., *I post to connect with a brand or company*. Participants also discussed feeling obligated to post about product and services they used often, i.e., *I post because I feel obligated, I post to express my loyalty for a brand or company, I post to express my support for a product or service*. Participants also felt obligated to post, because of their reliance on product and services reviews. Participants that read reviews regularly were motivated to post because they felt as though it was their duty to other consumers who helped them, i.e., *I post because I feel as though it is my duty, I post because I feel obligated*. Although participants felt obligated, they rarely accessed the Internet for the sole purpose of posting an online review. Participants explained that they tended to post reviews because it was convenient, i.e., *I post because it is convenient, I post because I have a free moment, I post because I have nothing better to do*.

Participants exercised care in the information they shared with others. They considered the details of their content, in addition to their audience and the outlet in which the content was posted. Their ultimate goal is to reach other consumers, to help consumers by providing information and sharing their experience and/or opinion.
Phase II: Survey

Study 1: Pre-test Survey.

The statistical analysis proposed by Rodgers and Sheldon (2002) was used in the present research. Following the steps set forth by Rodgers and Sheldon and Rodgers and Chen (2005), the researcher developed the initial pool of items by pulling motives from the literature and synthesizing motives identified through the in-depth interviews to form specific items for the quantitative measure (RQ1). Data from the 23 participants was downloaded into SPSS for analysis. Where necessary, scaled items were reverse coded so lower values indicated negative responses and higher values indicated positive responses.

An exploratory factor analysis with a Varimax rotation was conducted on the 39 items to identify factors of online product and service review posting. The researcher originally thought the self-presentation motives should be included within the ORP; however, with this large amount of items, a total of 10 factors emerged with eigenvalues +/- 1.0. To arrive at a cleaner data reduction, self-presentation items were analyzed separately from the other 33 items. An exploratory factor analysis with a fixed number of factors and a Varimax rotation was conducted on the 33 items to identify factors of online product and service review posting. A fixed number of factors were used as the extraction technique, as a test of the hypothesized motives that resulted from the qualitative interviews. Five factors emerged, which accounted for 22 items and explained 77% of the total variance. Factor one was centered on sharing information to help others. Factor two was motives to post positive reviews, where as factor three was motives to post reviews more negative in nature. Factor four was seeking a response, and factor five was feelings.

39
of obligations. Unfortunately, only four factors proved to be reliable measures. Factor 3 had a Cronbach’s alpha of less than .60. All other motives had Cronbach alphas of greater than .74. Due to the small sample size, the researcher kept the original 33 items and the six self-presentation items in the final survey.

**Study 2: Final Survey.**

Following in the footsteps of Study 1, the researcher completed the statistical analysis proposed by Rodgers and Sheldon (2002) for scale development. Data from the 115 participants was downloaded from Qualtrics to SPSS for further analysis. Where necessary, scaled items were reverse coded so lower values indicated negative responses and higher values indicated positive responses. The majority of participants were female, 70%, while males represented 30% of the sample population. 84.6% of the participants identified themselves as White/Caucasian, 6.8% as Black/African American, 6.8% as Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1.7% as Latino/Hispanic. Only a total of 2.6% of participants were college freshman, 4.3% were college sophomores, 40.2% were college juniors, 24.8% were college seniors, and 28.2% were professional/graduate students.

**Motivations to Post Online Product and Service Reviews**

Items comprising the ORP were factor analyzed using a Varimax rotation and a fixed number extraction. A fixed number of factors were used as the extraction technique, in order to arrive at a clean set of data and as a test of the hypothesized motives that resulted from the qualitative interviews. As a result of the findings from study 1, self-presentation items were analyzed separately. A separate factor analysis with a Varimax rotation was performed on the self-presentation items.
The ORP factor analysis yielded five factors, which accounted for 55.806% of the total item variance. An additional factor analysis with a Varimax rotation and fixed number of factors was performed, excluding the ORP items that did not originally have a high enough loading. Items that did not load at .55 or higher were excluded. The following six items were excluded: *(I post a product or service review to) provide information, help people like me, get a response, tell others what to do, share information about a special interest, express my loyalty for a brand or company.*

The second factor analysis yielded five factors, and accounted for 59.583% of the total variance. In order to arrive at a more reliable and concise scale, the researcher used excluded items that loaded below .65. According to Stacks (2002), in order to complete further statistical analysis, “(1) each factor has at least two items that ‘load’ at +/- .60 and (2) each item does not ‘load’ on other factors greater than +/- .40” (p. 140). As a result, the following eight items were excluded: *(I post a product or service review to) inform others of an issue or problem, share my experience, express my excitement, express my disappointment/frustration, make a review rating more accurate, share information about a common interest, connect with family and friends, connect with a brand or a company.*

A total of 18 items remained, which make up the current ORP scale. The researcher created one index for each online posting motive in order to be able to perform statistical analyses to test the validity of the new measure. A total of five indices were created for the five factors by averaging the two to six items that comprise each factor to create new variables, i.e., Factor 1 (Inform/Help), Factor 2 (Share), Factor 3 (Response), Factor 4 (Convenience), and Factor 5 (Obligation). Table 2 and Table 3 summarize the five factors that comprise the ORP scale.
Table 2

Rotated Factor Pattern of the ORP Data (Factors 1-3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submotives</th>
<th>Inform/Help</th>
<th>Share</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inform/Help</td>
<td>.677</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Express my support for a product or service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.729</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Provide information not currently available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.794</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Help those less knowledgeable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.664</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Share information about a product or service I am passionate about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.760</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Help others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share</td>
<td>.686</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Share information that might be of use to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.725</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Connect with many people at once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.758</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. Share entertaining content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>.733</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9. Express myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.735</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10. Get something in return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.654</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11. Receive a promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.691</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12. Get feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

Rotated Factor Pattern for ORP Data (Factors 4-5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submotives</th>
<th>Convenience</th>
<th>Obligation</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>.792</td>
<td></td>
<td>14. It is convenient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.838</td>
<td></td>
<td>15. I have a free moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.648</td>
<td></td>
<td>16. I have nothing better to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation</td>
<td>.870</td>
<td></td>
<td>17. I feel obligated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.842</td>
<td></td>
<td>18. I feel as though it is my duty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A reliability analysis using the measure of Cronbach’s alpha was completed for each factor: Factor 1 (\(\alpha = .861\)), Factor 2 (\(\alpha = .751\)), Factor 3 (\(\alpha = .739\)), Factor 4 (\(\alpha = .684\)), Factor 5 (\(\alpha = .789\)). Factor 4 was slightly less reliable than the other four factors, but each factor maintained a good measure of internal consistency. Table 4 summarizes the descriptive statistics for each factor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptive Statistics for ORP Factors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Review Posting Scale Factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 1: Inform/Help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 2: Share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 3: Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 4: Convenience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 5: Obligation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A separate factor analysis with a principal component analysis and Varimax rotation was performed on the six self-presentation items. Two factors emerged, accounting for 69.554% of the total variance. One item was excluded, as it did not meet the .65 or greater loading point set forth by the researcher. The item, *when I post product and service reviews online I want to be seen as likable*, was excluded from further analysis. Separate indices were created for the online posting self-presentation items. As was done with ORP items, the researcher created one index for each online posting motive in order to be able to perform statistical analyses to test the validity of the new measure. A total of two indices were created for the two factors by averaging the two to three items that comprise each factor to create new variables. Table 5 summarizes the two self-presentation factors.
Table 5

Rotated Factor Pattern of the Self-Presentation Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submotives</th>
<th>Attractive</th>
<th>Knowledgeable</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attractive</td>
<td>.698</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Be perceived as positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.916</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Be perceived as attractive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.845</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Appear cool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td></td>
<td>.917</td>
<td>4. Be perceived as intelligent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.742</td>
<td>5. Appear in the know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When I post online product and service reviews I want to:

A reliability analysis using the measure of Cronbach’s alpha was completed for each factor to check for internal consistency of the items, Factor 1 ($\alpha = .808$), Factor 2 ($\alpha = .663$). Table 6 summarizes the descriptive statistics for the two self-presentation factors.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Self-Presentation Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Presentation Factors</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factor 1: Attractive</td>
<td>8.3077</td>
<td>2.45111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 2: Knowledgeable</td>
<td>7.5385</td>
<td>1.72975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Motivations to Use the Internet

The WMI was factor analyzed separately from the ORP and the self-presentation items. A factor analysis with a Varimax rotation and a fixed set of factors was conducted. A fixed number of factors were used in order to remain consistent with previous research. The four WMI factors emerged, accounting for 79.215% of the total variance. The four WMI factors created four separate indices, representing the four primary Internet motives identified by the original WMI. Results from the current study show the motive *e-mail other people* as a submotive under the research factor as opposed to the communication.
factor, which it has loaded under in all previous studies involving the WMI. Due to the reliability and validity of the WMI scale, the submotive *e-mail other people* was run under the communication factor when completing further analysis. Table 7 summarizes the four WMI factors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table 7</strong> Rotated Factor Pattern of the WMI Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submotives</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Surf</th>
<th>Shop</th>
<th>Communicate</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I use the web to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>.832</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Do research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.846</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Get information I need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.752</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Find out things I need to know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.642</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. E-mail other people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surf</td>
<td>.789</td>
<td>.865</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Explore new sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Surf for fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Find interesting webpages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop</td>
<td>.884</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. Make a purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.807</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9. Purchase a product or service I’ve heard about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate</td>
<td>.847</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.802</td>
<td>10. Buy things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.802</td>
<td>11. Communicate with others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A reliability analysis using the measure of Cronbach’s alpha was completed for each factor: Factor 1 ($\alpha = .849$), Factor 2 ($\alpha = .846$), Factor 3 ($\alpha = .858$), Factor 4 ($\alpha = .830$). All four factors provided great reliability estimates, with coefficients greater than .80. Table 8 summarizes the descriptive statistics for the WMI factors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Web Motivation Inventory Factors</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factor 1: Research</td>
<td>14.1197</td>
<td>1.34011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 2: Surf</td>
<td>12.9744</td>
<td>2.01914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 3: Shop</td>
<td>13.0000</td>
<td>1.79078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 4: Communicate</td>
<td>14.1368</td>
<td>1.23809</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Predictors of Attitudes Toward eWOM**

To address RQ2a (*What motives predict consumers’ attitudes toward eWOM?*) the researcher performed a regression analysis. The seven items that addressed consumers’ attitudes toward eWOM created one index, simply titled eWOM variable. The eWOM variable served as the dependent variable in the regression analysis. The five ORP factors and two self-presentation factors served as the independent variables in the multiple linear regression analysis. Results from the multiple linear regression show that the seven-factor model significantly predicted attitudes toward eWOM ($F(7, 109) = 3.253, p < .05$). The attractive motive ($\beta = .231, p = .031$) was a significant predictor of attitudes toward eWOM. Table 9 summarizes the regression analysis.
Predictors of Attitudes toward Online Product and Service Reviews

In order to answer RQ2b (What motives predict consumers’ attitudes toward online product and service reviews?) the researcher performed an additional regression analysis. The three items that addressed consumers’ attitudes toward online product and service reviews created one index, the review variable. The review variable served as the dependent variable. The five ORP factors and two self-presentation factors served as the independent variables. A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict consumers’ attitudes toward online product and service reviews based on specific posting motives. The regression was not significant ($F(7, 109) = 1.623, p > .05$). Table 9 summarizes the regression analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$P$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inform/Help</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>.872</td>
<td>.385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.706</td>
<td>.482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.463</td>
<td>.644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>.678</td>
<td>.499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>1.242</td>
<td>.217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractive</td>
<td>.231*</td>
<td>2.186</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.297</td>
<td>.767</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = .173$ (Adj. $R^2 = .120$)
*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (two-tailed)
**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (two-tailed)
Table 10

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Motivations Predicting Attitudes Toward Online Product and Service Reviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inform/Help</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.488</td>
<td>.626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share</td>
<td>-.057</td>
<td>-.503</td>
<td>.616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>.969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>-.059</td>
<td>-.614</td>
<td>.541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation</td>
<td>.195*</td>
<td>1.989</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractive</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.801</td>
<td>.425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>.134</td>
<td>1.180</td>
<td>.241</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R² = .173 (Adj. R² = .120)

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (two-tailed)
**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (two-tailed)

Frequency of Posting

To address RQ2c (What is the relationship between motives and frequency of posting online product and service reviews?) the researcher performed a correlation analysis to determine whether a significant relationship exists between posting motives and the number of times participants said they posted online product and service reviews within the last six months. A bivariate, Pearson correlation was conducted comparing the five ORP factors and the two self-presentation factors to the posting frequency measure. A significant correlation was found between the inform/help factor and frequency of posting (r(2) = .185, p < .05). A significant correlation was also found between the convenience motive and frequency of posting (r(2) = .292, p < .01). An additional significant correlation was found between the knowledgeable, self-presentation motive and frequency of posting (r(2) = .275, p < .01). Table 10 summarizes the bivariate correlation analysis.
Table 11

Correlation Matrix Between Motivations and Frequency of Posting Online Product and Service Reviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Frequency of Posting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inform/Help</td>
<td>.185* (.046)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share</td>
<td>.082 (.380)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>.080 (.393)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>.292** (.001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation</td>
<td>.045 (.627)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractive</td>
<td>.148 (112)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>.275** (.003)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (two-tailed)
**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (two-tailed)

Frequency of Reading

To address RQ2d (What is the relationship between motives and frequency of reading online product and service reviews?) the researcher performed a correlation analysis to determine if a significant relationship exists between posting motives and frequency of reading online product and service reviews. A bivariate, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted comparing the five ORP factors and the two self-presentation factors to the reading frequency measure. No significant or strong correlations were found. Table 11 summarizes the bivariate correlation results.
Table 12
Correlation Matrix Between Motivations and Frequency of Reading Online Product and Service Reviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Frequency of Posting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inform/Help</td>
<td>.064 (.491)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share</td>
<td>-.133 (.154)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>-.068 (.464)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>.164 (.077)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation</td>
<td>.143 (.124)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractive</td>
<td>-.093 (.319)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>.166 (.073)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (two-tailed)
**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (two-tailed)

Relationship Between ORP and WMI

An additional correlation analysis was performed in order to address the third and final research question, RQ3 (What is the relationship between the ORP and the WMI? What are the similarities and differences?). A bivariate, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted comparing the five ORP factors and the two self-presentation factors to the WMI to determine whether a significant relationship exist. A significant correlation was found between the inform/help motive and three of the WMI motives, research \((r(2) = .193, p < .05)\), surf \((r(2) = .210, p < .05)\), and communicate \((r(2) = .301, p < .01)\). Table 12 summarizes the bivariate correlation results.
Table 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation Matrix Between ORP and WMI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform/Help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (two-tailed)
**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (two-tailed)

Validity and Reliability

Mixed method designs must be assessed for validity and reliability of both the qualitative and quantitative methods. In order to establish qualitative validity the researcher used a recording device and took thorough notes. Each in-depth interview was transcribed to ensure an accurate representation and interpretation of the data. The researcher analyzed each specific case, i.e., in-depth interview, and did not simply dismiss data that did not fit a favored interpretation or an existing category. Data triangulation was established by combining the varying perspectives of the in-depth interview participants.

The strength and value of qualitative research lies in its rich description. While responses may be more thoughtful and contain more information, it is difficult to
generalize findings to the larger population. The distinct advantage of surveys, however, is the methods ability to generalize findings to a greater extent. Surveys maintain external validity. The strength of a survey’s validity and reliability lies in the instrument. The items in the ORP scale are based on primary research findings and a review of the literature, and thus maintain face validity. The items on the WMI scale have maintained internal consistency across time and varying samples, resulting in a valid and reliable instrument.

The methodological triangulation enabled instrument development, as the survey consisted of items grounded in the view of the qualitative participants, and data transformation, in that the researcher was able to quantify the qualitative data to an extent. The motives identified from the qualitative, in-depth interviews were run quantitatively to arrive at set of items that best represented participants’ motives to post online product and service reviews, i.e., the Online Review Posting (ORP) scale.
Phase I: In-depth Interviews

In regards to RQ1, 39 different motives for posting online product and service reviews were identified by participants. These motives were derived from 12 separate interviews. The researcher completed constant comparative analysis to distill qualitative data into findings and identify various motives. Many of the qualitative findings have been discussed in previous review literature, and a number of the motives have been identified in the previous posting literature.

In line with Goldsmith and Horowitz (2006), participants in the current study exchanged product and service related information online in the same way they do offline. Participants explained that they sought out certain friends and/or groups they felt would find the information relevant, both online and offline. Participants also placed an equal amount of trust in online and offline reviews as Hardey (2011) cited. While they remained critical of review content, and dismissed reviews that simply said, “This product sucks,” they believed the information other consumers posted to be true. Not all of the participants could articulate why they trusted content created by consumers they did not know, but a number of participants explained that it was due to the personal nature of review posts. Participants did not believe an individual would write a review about a false experience with a product or service.

Walther (2007) found that participants content differed depending on the target of their message. Participants in the current study also discussed this behavior, as was discussed in category one in the results section. One participant stated, “I know where my
friends are looking, and for what things.” She explained the differences between her Twitter and Facebook audiences and how each audience impacts the content she posts. Walther also found that the audience impacted the amount of time participants spent editing their content prior to posting. While editing behavior was not measured in this study, participants did believe that their content was a reflection of themselves, as was discussed in category two, and acknowledged a number of self-presentation motives. *I want to be perceived as intelligent* and *I want to be perceived as positive* were the two most salient self-presentation motives. Social media outlets heightened self-presentation concerns. Participants felt that social media outlets, rather than review or company websites, display their online identity to a greater extent. While participants acknowledged their online identity, in contrast to Toma, Hancock, and Ellison’s (2011) findings, the participants in the current study did not feel their online identities were significantly different from their offline identity; “People’s tweets are very strict to their personalities. If they are pessimistic, then all their tweets are super negative. If they are funny, then all their tweets are funny. I know what to expect from people.”

A social interaction motive almost always emerges in studies involving social media outlets (Hollenbaugh, 2011; Smock, Ellison, Lampe, & Wohn, 2011; Chen, 2011; Oeldorf-Hirsch & Sundar, 2010; Rodgers & Chen, 2005). Smock, Ellison, Lampe, and Wohn (2011) identified social interaction as the most salient motive for predicting Facebook use, and Chen (2011) found that Twitter users who seek out Twitter most actively gratify their need to connect with others to a greater extent. Participants in the current study acknowledged their desire for a response when posting a product or service review, and explained the motivation to receive a response is greater for posts on social
media outlets. Social interaction is an inherent function of social media outlets, therefore participants desire for feedback on Facebook and Twitter is logical, as they use the site to interact and connect with others. While participants were seeking a response to their online review, an exhibitionism motive was not identified. Unlike Hollenbaugh’s (2011) participants, participants of the current study did not post reviews for attention or to gain fame. Their desire for a response could be misconstrued as seeking attention, but the participants were simply looking for an interaction to either reaffirm or negate their review of a product or service.

Largely absent from previous posting literature are motives that emerge from consumers desire to help other consumers. The motive “to help” or “helping” behavior have not been analyzed to the extent that social interaction or self-presentation motives have been analyzed. This research extends current knowledge as a result of its help motives, i.e., I post online product and service reviews to help others, help those less knowledgeable, help people like me. Two of the three help items loaded onto a final factor (factor one) after quantitative analysis. The results of the correlation analysis showed the inform/help factor had a positive, significant correlation to the frequency of posting. Results showed that there was also a significant correlation between the inform/help factor and three of the four WMI motives, research, surf, and communication. Based on the current studies results, future research could benefit from additional analysis of various helping motives.
Phase II: Survey

Study 1: Pre-test.

Self-presentation items were originally included in the ORP scale. An initial principle component factor analysis with a Varimax rotation was performed that included all 39 identified motives. As stated in the results section, 10 factors emerged with eigenvalues over +/- 1.0. This raised the question of whether combining the items produced impure results. The researcher realized that the self-presentation items were measuring motivations in a slightly different way. The self-presentation items measured motivations as participants’ desires, rather than behaviors. For example, the ORP item, *I post a product or service review to help those less knowledgeable* uses the behavior help to define the underlying motive. Where as the self-presentation item, *I want to be seen as intelligent*, reflects a participant’s desire to be viewed a certain way. In order to arrive at a cleaner, more concise data reduction, the self-presentation items were separated from the ORP scale and two separate factor analyses were performed. While the ORP factor analysis revealed 5 factors, the self-presentation factor analysis did not reveal any factors. The researcher believes this was due to the small sample size, seeing as the items loaded onto two distinct factors in study 2.

Three of the five factors were consistent from study 1 to study 2. Factor one remained centered on providing information to help other consumers, and factor five dealt with feelings of obligation. A response factor emerged again as well. Unlike the results from study 1, in study 2 a convenience factor emerged. The factor that embodied negative posting experiences did not result in study 2. While the factor titled “share” in
study 2 does reflect positive posting experience, the researcher felt share was a better representation of the items and articulated the overarching motives the best.

**Study 2: Survey.**

Phase two of the research distilled the 39 identified posting motives to create a basic, yet comprehensive scale. As a result, a number of the original posting motives were not part of the statistical analysis. Baek, Holton, Harp, and Yaschur’s (2011) control motives were two of the motives not included. The researcher believes it is a result of the wording. In retrospect, the wording was different from how the majority participants discussed their interactions with others via reviews. While the motives were true, the slightly negative wording, i.e., *tell others what to do*, may have deterred survey participants from agreeing with the statements. As was discussed in the qualitative findings, participants did not want appear negative. The researcher was surprised to find that company and brand related motives did not load onto the final factors. A number of participants discussed their interaction and experience with companies. Participants often cited their loyalty to the company, product, or service as the motive for posting the online review, “I just yelped it, and while I was on there and I saw Andy’s. I thought…I should do this, because it is probably about time.”

Neither a social connection nor a communication motive emerged as a final factor in the ORP. This finding contrasts the majority of the posting literature, as social connection and communication are very common motives. The explanation for this difference lies in the large number of outlets available on the Internet in which consumers can post online reviews. While participants acknowledged that they were indeed communicating with other consumers on consumer review websites and company
websites, they generally did not cite communication or connection as motives for posting. The reverse held true for social media outlets. Participants looked to social media to communicate and connect with others via their reviews. Therefore the disconnection may lie in lack of specification concerning outlets. If the study was limited to social media outlets, different factors may have emerged.

Results from the WMI factor analysis showed the motive *e-mail other people* as a submotive under the research factor as opposed to the communication factor. In all past studies involving the WMI *e-mail other people* has loaded as a submotive under the communication factor. Due to the reliability and validity of the WMI scale, the submotive *e-mail other people* was run under the communication factor when completing the further analysis. The researcher believes this discrepancy could be due to the college student sample. A number of students see e-mail as a form of communication, but they also see it as a practice they have to engage in to be able to get information they need and find out things they need to know, which are submotives under the WMI research factor.

**Theoretical Implications**

In line with U&G theory, this study sought to extend research on motivations by identifying posting motives and understanding the relationship between motives and gratifications, i.e., attitudes toward eWOM and attitudes toward online product and service reviews. By addressing RQ2a the current study found that the seven-factor model, which consisted of the ORP scale and the two additional self-presentation items, successfully predicted attitudes toward eWOM. This finding suggests the scale is a valid measure for assessing specific gratifications, which for the purpose of this study are attitudes toward eWOM in general. One self-presentation factor, attractive, was able to
significantly predict attitudes toward eWOM independently. This finding extends beyond the realm of product and service reviews, and touches on participants’ desire to be perceived in a good light by others in an online environment. Self-presentation motives are not limited to review posts. They extend to all content posted online, thus is it logical for the attractive factor to predict eWOM, which is also not limited to reviews, but encompasses “any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers” online (Hennig-Thuraru, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004, p. 39).

Unfortunately, the seven-factor model was not able to predict attitudes toward online product and service reviews. This may be due to the fact that participants were one step removed from the actual online posting process. In other words, students were asked to indicate their attitudes toward online product and service reviews rather than asking them to write an online product or service review and then rate attitudes toward online reviews. Alternatively, and admittedly, existing attitudinal measures are general in nature and may not adequately tap the attitudes of consumers who are posting online product and service reviews. Future studies can rectify by putting students in the moment and by asking them to carry out an online posting task to perhaps gain a more accurate or more specific understanding of attitudes toward online product and service reviews.

As some functionalist scholars suggest, motives give rise to behavior. The current study sought to better understand this relationship by analyzing the relationship between motives and frequency of posting and reading online product and service reviews. Results for RQ2c showed a correlation between frequency of posting online product and service reviews and the inform/help factor, the convenience factor, and the knowledgeable factor. While the three correlations are weak, they are still significant and help scholars better
understand motives that drive a higher frequency of posts. This finding is beneficial to practitioners as well in that consumers who post often are more profitable. Meaning it is advantageous to target consumers who post more, because they tend to have more of an influence; they create more content and attract more followers.

No significant correlations were found between frequency of reading and posting motives (RQ2d). This finding suggests there are keys differences between motives to post online product and service reviews and motives to read online product and service reviews. Participants from Phase one, in-depth interviews, distinguished between their motives to post and their motives to read. In line with much of the product review literature, participants were motivated to read online reviews in order to make an informed purchase decisions. Participants had little, if any, concern for other consumers and were not concerned about their online presentation. It is logical for self-presentation items to exhibit no correlation to the reading of online product and service reviews, because many of the self-presentation concerns arise due to content creation. Participants experience anxiety surrounding the content of their posts, and the permanence of online content only heightens this anxiety. As was outlined in category one of the qualitative findings, participants tailored the content of their posts based on their audience and the outlet in which they were posting.

As an additional test of validity, RQ3 compared the ORP scale and Rodgers and Sheldon’s (2002) WMI. A correlation analysis was performed to assess the relationship between the two measures. A significant correlation was found between the ORP inform/help motive and the WMI motives, research, surf, and communicate. A connection is clear between the content of the ORP inform/help factor submotives and
the WMI research factor submotives. The factor submotives involve providing information and seeking information, respectfully. For example, the ORP inform/help factor includes, *I post an online product or service review to provide information not currently available and I post online product and service reviews to share information that might be of use to others*. The WMI research factor includes, *I use the web to get information I need and I use the web to find out things I need to know*. The relationship between the inform/help motive and the surf motive is less prevalent, but can be illustrated through submotives once again. The ORP submotive, *I post online product and service reviews to share information about a product or service I am passionate about*, and the WMI submotive, *I use the web to find interesting webpages*, reflect positive online experiences centered on topics of interest. The qualitative findings provide perspective to the relationship between the inform/help factor and the WMI communicate factor. Participants viewed online product and service reviews as a communication tool. Participants wrote reviews to specific friends and family members via social media outlets, but also communicated with society at large via consumer review and company websites. While they were motivated to either inform or help others, they acknowledged that in doing so, they were communicating.

While there are many ways to validate a new scale, this study chose the validation technique of correlating the new ORP scale with the known WMI scale. What resulted was a significant correlation of just one factor. From this, it is difficult to conclude the validity of the ORP. On one hand, it suggests the ORP may be validated, at least on the one factor. On the other hand, it calls to question whether a different scale other than the WMI may be used by future studies to examine the validity of the ORP. It may be that
the WMI, due to its global nature (macro Internet motives) is not a sensitive enough measure to be used alongside the ORP. Future studies can handle this by using alternative measures including the ones listed here.

**Limitations and Future Research**

Future motivational studies wanting to include self-presentation items, also referred to as impression management items, should adapt the wording to reflect behavior as opposed to desires. Altering the items to reflect behaviors allows for the inclusion of self-presentation items on standard motive scales. In line with functionalism, the majority of motive scales measure motivation through behavior, including the ORP and the WMI. Using the current study as an example, the self-presentation item, *I want others to perceive me as likable*, could be altered to reflect a behavior, *I post a product or service reviews to share information that will make others perceive me as likable* or *I post a product or service review to express opinions that will make others perceive me as likable.*

When developing future scales, greater caution should be exercised to include multiple items that reflect one concept. For example, in the current study the motive *I post a product or service review to make a review rating more accurate* stood alone. In order to have a more accurate analysis of this specific motive, additional items that address accurate review ratings should have been included. Multiple items representing one concept aid in factor analysis and serve as an additional reliability measure. The original 39 items also varied in specificity. Future studies should strive to either be general, as seen in the WMI and the ORP item *I post a product or service review to*
share, or very specific like the ORP item *I post a product or service review to share a common interest.*

Results from RQ2d indicated a difference in motives to post and motives read, justifying continued research on online posting motives. While this study takes a step in the right direction, it does not fill the gap that exists as a result of the focus on reading online reviews and product purchase. Future research employing the ORP scale needs to be conducted. The ORP scale should be replicated on separate outlets. As was previously discussed, outlets play an influential role in content creation. Future research would benefit from analyzing product and service reviews on social media versus product and service reviews on consumer review websites and company websites. Based on qualitative findings, further specification of social media outlets, i.e., Facebook versus Twitter, could also result in significant differences. Cultural differences should also be acknowledged. Future research should seek to understand the impact culture and social constructs have on motives to post product and service reviews and content choice. As the Internet continues to evolve, and additional outlets emerge, the ORP scale will need to be replicated across the varying outlets to assess similarities and differences.

The ORP also needs to be replicated across varying samples. Additional motives may emerge once the ORP has been replicated using different samples. A limitation to the current study is the non-probability convenience sample, comprised completely of college students from a large Mid-western university. All significant findings from the current study were based on responses from a non-representative sample. As a result, participant responses in the current study could vary when compared to a sample comprised of participants varying in age and geographic location. It is also important to
note the gender, ethnicity, and class majorities present in this study. The majority of participants were White/Caucasian females. There were also vast differences within the college student sample, 40.2% of the sample were college juniors, where as only 2.6 were college freshman, and 4.3% were college sophomores. The small sample size also serves as a limitation. Due to the time constraint of completing two methods within the specified amount of time, a smaller $N$ (115) than anticipated resulted for study two.
The purpose of the current research was to identify motives to post online product and service reviews. A mixed method design was implemented in order to uncover online posting motives, and to determine the relationship between the identified posting motives and various attitudes and behaviors that pertain to Internet use. According to David McClelland (1987) “progress has been made in the field of motivation only as some standardization of measurement occurred” (as cited in Rodgers and Sheldon, 2002). This study created the Online Review Posting (ORP) scale. The ORP scale extends research on motivations as it organizes the reasons for posting product and service reviews online. Scale items were initially derived from qualitative, in-depth interviews then subjected to further, quantitative analysis. A factor analysis was performed in order to arrive at overarching factors that are representative of the seven main motives for posting online product and service reviews.

Adhering to the U&G theory, this study sought to identify the motives that predict consumers’ attitudes toward eWOM and consumers’ attitudes toward online product and service reviews. Results indicated the ORP scale was able to predict consumers’ attitudes toward eWOM, but was not able to predict consumers’ attitudes toward online product and service reviews. The study also sought to understand the relationship between posting motives and the frequency of posting and reading product and service reviews online. Results showed a relationship between three of the seven ORP factors, inform/help, convenience, and knowledgeable, and frequency of posting. No
relationships were found between the ORP factors and the frequency of posting reviews, suggesting motives to post are significantly different from motives to read.

In an effort to test the validity of the ORP scale, the ORP scale was compared to the Web Motivation Inventory (WMI) created by Rodgers and Sheldon (2002). The WMI is a reliable and valid scale that has been tested over time, and on a diverse set of samples. The WMI provides an analysis of macro Internet motives, while the ORP scale provides an analysis of micro Internet motives, specifically motives to post online reviews. Results showed a significant correlation between the ORP factor, inform/help, and the WMI factors, research, surf, and communicate.

The current study made a significant step toward understanding the motivations to post online product and service reviews. The identification of online posting motives extends present research by helping to fill a gap in the review literature. Very few scholars have analyzed consumers’ motives to post online. Scholars have examined UGC and eWOM, in addition to product and service reviews, but the literature is largely focused on effects. The literature is limited in that findings fail to provide a complete analysis of the review process. Too much focus is placed on purchase intent. In order to understand consumer behavior, i.e., purchases, an analysis of posting motives is essential.

The ORP scale is a functional scale can be used in future studies to extend research on micro Internet motives, and to analyze behavior on various Internet outlets.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX 1

In-depth Interview Discussion Guide

INTRODUCTION

Hi I am Hannah. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me; I really appreciate it.

Do you mind if I record our conversation so I am able to transcribe it at a later date? All of your information will be kept confidential. Your name will not be associated with the content you provide.

WARM UP/INTERNET MOTIVATIONS

Where does the Internet fit in your daily life? At what points in the day are you accessing the Internet?

PROBE: What are you doing when you are on the Internet? What are your reasons for accessing the Internet?

LISTEN FOR: Specific actions, specific reasons/motives

Tell me more about (INSERT REASON). Describe the last time you accessed the Internet for (INSERT REASON).

LISTEN FOR: Time reference (daily, weekly, once in a while)

PROBE: Additional reasons/motives

Tell me more about (INSERT ACTION). Describe the last time you completed (INSERT ACTION) while you were on the Internet.

LISTEN FOR: Time reference (daily, weekly, once in a while)

PROBE: Additional actions (i.e., content creation—posting)

POSTING MOTIVATIONS

Think back to the last time you posted a review about a product online. When was this?

Where was this? What platform did you post on?

LISTEN FOR: Outlet (i.e., social media network, company website, etc), reason/motives, audience

Can you talk me through what you did when you posted the content?

PROBE: Did you like/dislike the product or service?

PROBE: Were you upset/happy?
PROBE: Did you go online to specifically post the review or did you post after seeing something – an advertisement, another post. What was your trigger?

What did you post or say about the product or service? Describe the content of your post.

PROBE: Was it a positive/negative review?

Was it about a product or service you know a lot about?

PROBE: Do you consider yourself knowledgeable about the product (category)? Do you consider yourself an expert?

**Why did you post the review? What, specifically, were the reasons you posted the review?**

PROBE: What drove you to post on said website/social media network/online community?

PROBE/LISTEN FOR: Specific reasons/motives

Did you post because you find posting to be enjoyable, entertaining, the cool thing to do?

Did you post to provide information, to share information that may be of use to other people, to tell others about yourself?

Did you post out of habit, as a way to occupy your time, to give you something to do when you were bored?

Did you post to communicate with others?

How often do you post product reviews?

PROBE: Do you consider yourself a frequent poster? How many times have your posted a product review in the last months?

What outlet do you post on most often?

Do you think product reviews are helpful in helping to make purchasing decisions?

Why do you think other people post?

LISTEN FOR: motives/reasons they identify but don’t personally find relevant, social desirability, egocentrism

When you post, who is generally your intended audience?

LISTEN FOR: Family, friends, companies/brands, people with shared interest, future employers, people in similar field
PROBE: Are you posting as a way to communicate with people you know or individuals you do not know?

PROBE: Does the content of your post change depending on the audience?

Do you post in response to another post?

What makes you want to respond to others’ post?

PROBE: Relationship maintenance (i.e., to help friends, to meet new people, to talk to someone, to pass time)

PROBE: Do you feel you are part of a (posting) community?

PROBE: How often do you respond to other’s post?

Do you check back to see if anyone has responded to your post?

PROBE: How often do you check back?

Are you concerned with how others perceive your posts (and you)?

PROBE: Do you want others to perceive you as likable, socially desirable, competent, intelligent, ethical, moral?

PROBE: Do you post to gain status, to look good, to feel important, to feel more in control?

**SCENARIOS – Choose from the following scenarios**

Now we are going to discuss a number of posting scenarios:

Imagine you buy a camera and you find the quality of the photos to be subpar and you post. Why do you post?

PROBE: What does your post say? Where do you post the review? Who is the intended audience? What platform do you post on?

Imagine you are really mad about (INSERT RELEVANT ISSUE) and you post. Why do you post?

PROBE: What does your post say? Where do you post the review? Who is the intended audience? What platform do you post on?

Imagine you find out a band is coming to town and you post. Why do you post?

PROBE: What does your post say? Where do you post the review? Who is the intended audience? What platform do you post on?

Imagine you are really interested in a new product and you post. Why do you post?
PROBE: What does your post say? Where do you post the review? Who is the intended audience? What platform do you post on?

Imagine you posted a product reviews on Facebook, and no one comments or “likes” your posts. How does this make you feel?

Imagine you tweet about a service you were overwhelmed/underwhelmed with, and the service provider tweets back at you. How does this make you feel?

Imagine you post about a product on a website, and multiple people respond to your post. How does this make you feel? Do you respond? Does your response depend on if their comments are positive or negative?

CONCLUSION

Do you have any other posting stories you would like share?

Is there anything you would like to talk about that we have not covered?

Thank you for participating in my research. Do you have any questions?

I may contact you in the future to discuss my analysis of your responses.

Thanks again, and have a great day.
APPENDIX 2

(Original) Online Posting Review (ORP) Scale

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

*I post product and/or service reviews to:

Inform:

1. To provide information
2. To inform others of an issue or problem
3. To provide information not currently available online

Share:

4. To share my experience
5. To share my opinion
6. To share information about a product or service I am passionate about
7. To share information that might be of use to others
8. To share information about a common interest
9. To share information about a special interest
10. To share entertaining content

Help:

11. To help others
12. To help those less knowledgeable
13. To help people like me

Connect:

14. To connect with my friends and family
15. To communicate with others
16. To connect with many people at once
17. To connect with a brand or company

Feedback:

18. To get a response
19. To get feedback
20. To receive support
21. To receive a promotion
22. To get something in return

Express:

21. To express myself
22. To express my disappointment/frustration
23. To express my excitement
24. To express my support for a product or service
25. To express my loyalty for a brand or company

Control:
25. To tell others what to do
26. To make a review rating more accurate

Convenience:
28. Because it is convenient
29. Because I have a free moment
30. Because I have nothing better to do

Obligation:
31. Because I feel obligated
32. Because I feel as though it is my duty

When I post product and/or service reviews I...

Self-presentation:
33. Want to be perceived as likable
34. Want to be seen as intelligent
35. Want to be seen as positive
36. Want to appear cool
37. Want to appear in the know
38. Want to be seen as attractive
APPENDIX 3

(Factored) Online Review Posting (ORP) Scale

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

I post product and/or service reviews to:

Factor 1: Inform/Help

1. Express my support for a product or service
2. Provide information not currently available
3. Help those less knowledgeable
4. Share information about a product or service I am passionate about
5. Help others
6. Share information that might be of use to others

Factor 2: Share

7. Connect with many people at once
8. Share entertaining content
9. Express myself

Factor 3: Response

10. Get something in return
11. Receive a promotion
12. Get feedback
13. Receive support

Factor 4: Convenience

14. It is convenient
15. I have a free moment
16. I have nothing better to do

Factor 5: OBLIGATION

17. I feel obligated
18. I feel as though it is my duty
When I post product and/or service reviews I...

Factor 6:

19. Want to be seen as attractive
20. Want to be seen as positive
21. Want to appear cool

Factor 7: Knowledgeable

22. Want to appear in the know
23. Want to be seen as intelligent
APPENDIX 4

Web Motivation Inventory (WMI)

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

I use the web to:

Factor 1: Research
7. Do research
8. Get information I need
9. Find out things I need to know

Factor 2: Surf
4. Explore new sites
5. Surf for fun
6. Find interesting web pages

Factor 3: Shop
1. Make a purchase
2. Buy things
3. Purchase a product I’ve heard about

Factor 4: Communicate
10. E-mail other people
11. Connect with my friends
12. Communication with others
# APPENDIX 5

## General Attitudes Towards Online Product and Service Reviews

I think online product and services reviews are generally:

1. Bad | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Good
2. Worthless | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Valuable
3. Not Helpful | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Very Helpful
## APPENDIX 6

### General Attitudes Toward eWOM

I think eWOM is:

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APPENDIX 7

Frequency of Posting Online Product and Service Reviews

1. Which of the following statements best describes how frequently you post product or service reviews?

   1. I almost never post online product or service reviews.
   2. I rarely post online product or service reviews.
   3. I sometimes post online product or service reviews.
   4. I frequently post online product or service reviews.
   5. I post online product or service reviews daily.

2. How many times in the past 6 months have you posted an online review for a product or service?

   1. None
   2. 1-3
   3. 4-6
   4. 7-9
   5. 10+
APPENDIX 8

Frequency of Reading Online Product and Service Reviews

1. Which of the following statements best describes how frequently you read product or service reviews?
   
   1. I almost never read online product or service reviews.
   2. I rarely read online product or service reviews.
   3. I sometimes read online product or service reviews.
   4. I frequently read online product or service reviews.
   5. I read online product or service reviews daily.

2. How many times in the past 6 months have you read an online review for a product or service?
   
   1. None
   2. 1-3
   3. 4-6
   4. 7-9
   5. 10+
APPENDIX 9

Demographics

1. What is your current year in school?
   1. Freshman
   2. Sophomore
   3. Junior
   4. Senior
   5. Graduate

2. What is your gender?
   1. Male
   2. Female

3. How would you describe yourself?
   1. White/Caucasian
   2. Black/African American
   3. Asian/Pacific Islander
   4. Latino/Hispanic
   5. Native American/American Indian
   6. Other