

possible today, to receive the market outcomes that consumers would rather have. Such customer-directed marketplace repositories provide clear metrics on the size and scope of particular market segments and specific customer objectives, along with identifying specific purchasers who want to be contacted with improved products and services. With clearer product improvement goals and focused communications, the savings from these efficiencies and the higher performance from achieving these goals can be shared as higher profits for first-to-market vendors and greater performance for early-adopter buyers.

Instead of the relatively closed communications systems described in the preferred embodiment, this embodiment provides: (1) the identification of “value” can be an active part of product use across marketplaces and digital environments, (2) that knowledge could be embodied in “Value Locator Repositories” that is employed by larger numbers of users so that they immediately receive greater value from products, services and environments (hereafter “products”), (3) those VLRs could be accessible during product use to improve performance interactively and immediately, (4) preferred sets of “value locators” could be downloaded to serve as filters to customize the digital environment to produce more of the product use outcomes purchasers prefer, (5) filters and those who employ them (where users are willing to share that information) could be stored on the VLRs where vendors could access them to learn what customers want to buy across the marketplace, (6) responsive vendors can serve those needs faster, producing more rapid evolution toward the types of human welfare people themselves would like.

One result could be faster evolution of products, services, environments and markets to supply the types of human and product progress people need and want to purchase. A second result could be a faster transfer of commercial guidance from vendors to those who pay the money (e.g., customers). In the end, since customers spend the money they could now have an independent self-conscious ability, with interactive market-wide communications, to steer vendors toward selling them the world they would like to buy.

What is claimed is:

1. A system comprising:
  - units of a commodity that can be used by respective users in different locations,
  - a user interface, which is part of each of the units of the commodity, configured to provide a medium for two-way local interaction between one of the users and the corresponding unit of the commodity, and further configured to elicit, from a user, information about the user’s perception of the commodity,
  - a memory within each of the units of the commodity capable of storing results of the two-way local interaction, the results including elicited information about user perception of the commodity,
  - a communication element associated with each of the units of the commodity capable of carrying results of the two-way local interaction from each of the units of the commodity to a central location, and
  - a component capable of managing the interactions of the users in different locations and collecting the results of the interactions at the central location.
2. The system of claim 1 in which the user interface is triggered based on user behaviors to generate two-way interactions with each of the users, each of the interactions relating to a corresponding specific one of the behaviors.

3. The system of claim 1 in which the interactions are triggered to occur repetitively for each of the users based on repeated uses of a feature of a unit of the commodity by the user.

4. The system of claim 1 in which the user interface comprises part of a functional user interface of the unit of the commodity that can be used to control features of the commodity.

5. The system of claim 1 in which the communication element also carries information from a passive probe that monitors the user’s use of the commodity.

6. The system of claim 1 in which the units of the commodity comprise telephone extension equipment and the central location comprises a private branch exchange or other central telephone network facility.

7. The system of claim 1 in which the results of the interactions are forwarded from the central location to a remote server for analysis.

8. The system of claim 1 in which the units of the commodity comprise facsimile equipment and the user interface triggers the two-way interaction to occur on-line between the unit of the facsimile equipment and a vendor of the facsimile equipment.

9. The system of claim 8 in which the on-line interaction occurs by voice spoken through the facsimile machine’s handset, transmitted by telephone line to a computer of the vendor, and stored at the vendor’s computer.

10. The system of claim 1 in which the two-way interaction provides instructions on how to use the commodity.

11. The system of claim 1 in which the units of the commodity comprise consumer television equipment.

12. The system of claim 11 in which the two-way interaction comprises posing questions to a user on a television screen concerning use of the commodity and receiving answers from the user expressed through a keypad or a handheld remote.

13. The system of claim 12 in which the answers are forwarded to a vendor of the commodity.

14. The system of claim 12 in which the keypad or hand-held remote comprises numeric keys.

15. The system of claim 1 in which the two-way interaction is mediated by a publicly or privately accessible on-line computerized information service.

16. The system of claim 1 in which the user interface presents information in one or more of the following styles: text, lists, charts, views, arrangements, hierarchies, graphical maps, sample extracts, abstracts, summary descriptions, or hypertext.

17. The system of claim 16 in which the user interface triggers two-way interactions that comprise training based on two-way interactions with all or some other users, the interactions being arranged to present actions that the user could take to increase performance or satisfaction to a level achieved by other users.

18. The system of claim 16 in which the style is hypertext.

19. The system of claim 1 wherein the user interface can be triggered based on user comprehension or performance with respect to the user’s use of the commodity.

20. The system of claim 1 wherein the user interface can be triggered by premature termination of use of the commodity.

21. The system of claim 1 wherein the user interface can be triggered by an exception resulting from use of the commodity.

22. The system of claim 1 wherein the elicited information is information about the user’s needs with respect to use of the commodity.