Online Communication of Public Leisure Services

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

Through the assistance of the Internet, public organizations can create lasting relationships with citizens in an individualized and interactive manner. The purpose of this study was to obtain a preliminarily understanding of the Web Presence of public leisure service agencies (PLSA) in Canada. Currently very little is known about the use of Internet Communication within PLSA. A stratified random sample of ten Canadian municipal Web sites helped to generate 100 content units from which a quantitative content analysis was conducted. Utilizing a marketing perspective, the analysis assessed the marketing communication efforts, design, electronic service quality, and interaction standards of these sites. Findings suggested that the evidence of marketing and communication efforts were quite limited while the design and navigational features, although basic, were well executed. The results indicated that most PLSA online communication is rather limited, focusing on providing basic information regarding programs, services, facilities and events. In the future, this is expected to change. In general, PLSA appear to recognize the importance of online communication. However, a re-definition of communication strategies may be needed for better implementation. It is suggested that these strategies should encompass the underlying goal of creating a relationship with citizens.

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Dedication

To helpful hearts:

Andrea, Amy and Bonnie.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Marketing communication is required for any organization attempting to create relationships with their participants, citizens, clients or consumers. It has been well stated, over the last decade, that the Internet is a crucial tool for this type of communication. In 2006, nearly 95% of Canadian public enterprises were using a Web site (Statistics Canada, 2006a). With such a high percentage of public services now online, specific attention is needed in all areas of these Web sites, including the area of leisure and recreation. It is imperative that public leisure agencies recognize that citizens are assessing Web sites just as much as they are the delivery of service programs or facilities. Recognizing this lasting phenomenon may help public leisure service agencies (PLSA) improve their Web presence and better fulfill the variety of needs in their community. Currently very little is known about the use of Internet Communication within PLSA. The number of Canadian PLSA represented on Web sites is also undefined. It is clear, however, that the majority of information pertaining to these agencies is contained in official municipal Web sites.

According to the 2005 Canadian Internet Use Survey, Internet participation in Canada reached nearly 68%, indicating that over two-thirds of Canadian adults now use the Internet (The Daily, 2006). Yet, little attention has been paid to how Web sites are used in PLSA by public users. Jackson (1997) acknowledged, some time ago, that leisure scholars have had little to say about the growing phenomenon of the Internet, and his commentary remains largely relevant ten years later. Any attempt at furthering our understanding of PLSA communicational activity must pay close attention to the online presence of these organizations. In the present study public leisure services represented Leisure and Recreation Departments in Canadian municipalities. PLSA Web sites act as a needed and required service to current and potential users. Web sites have to be both well received and stand up to specific service criteria. Online communication has been operationalized here to reflect not only the communication advantages, but also the service aspect of having a Web presence. Therefore, it was important to keep in mind both marketing communication and service quality literature when developing a research model around PLSA Web presence. Traditional services have been critiqued and evaluated for a number of years. With the introduction of the Internet and Web sites, online services require a new set of guidelines.

1.2 The Internet

Internet technology has resulted in a revolutionary transformation of traditional communication. The Internet phenomenon has produced more channels of communication than ever before. Organizations of all sizes are creating Web sites as sources for information, alternative ways to buy products, approaches to expand services, and ways to capture individuals' attention (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Malhotra, 2005). Web sites can reach a worldwide audience 24 hours a day, at a significantly lower cost than many other promotional or communication channels. Options for text, colour, animation, and sound are seemingly without limits on Web sites, facilitating user interaction. Kotler, Armstrong, and Cunningham (2005) suggested that in commercial contexts "to be competitive in today's new marketplace, companies must learn to use the Internet to market their products and services or risk being left behind” (p.86).

The Internet is a truly global medium that can be accessed from virtually anywhere in the world. Unless electronically blocked, every Web site is available around the world. Web sites enable both current and prospective users to access desired information anytime and anywhere. As people become more technologically savvy, future populations are expected to interact more frequently (Hu, Han, Jang, & Bai, 2005). Existing evidence suggests that income, education and age are important social determinates of Internet use and that older people and those with low incomes are much less likely to use the Internet (Cukier & Middleton, 2003; Kuk, 2002). Nevertheless, as more and more people find their way onto the Internet, users are becoming more diverse. Kotler et al. (2005) recognized that the Internet population is becoming increasingly representative of the Canadian population, “now nearly every socioeconomic group is aggressively adopting the Web” (p. 92).

1.3 Creating Relationships

Recognition of the importance leisure plays within public services is essential to forming strong communities. Hemingway (1999) and Glover (2004) both recognized that public leisure has the ability to help foster a greater sense of connection for communities. Through the assistance of the Internet, public organizations can create lasting relationships with citizens in a very personal and individualized manner. This opportunity has improved organizations' capacities for relationship building (Hu et al., 2005).

Identified as one of the most serious issues in public life today, Denhardt (2002) recognized the erosion of the relationship between citizens and their government. Expressing that community can only exist with the support of a governance structure that encourages civic involvement and civic responsibility and citizens who are actively involved (Denhardt). The New Public Service is a role of government that focuses on democracy and social criteria, one in which Government deals with a wide variety of interests to create shared value. Technology has made possible greater public assess to the policy process, which has been one reason the role of government is changing. Administrative control is giving way to citizen interaction and involvement (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2001).

Interactivity and personalization of the Internet greatly enhances the program marketer's ability to develop relationships between the users and the organization (Janal, 1998). Berry (1995) argued that strong relationship marketing programs provide added benefits to both the agency and the client. The majority of relationship marketing techniques focus on current users of services in an effort to develop loyalty and retention. The high volume of services offered by PLSA and an increasing recognition that educational, social, health and community benefits are more likely to accrue from regular participation, provide strong rationale to practitioners for generating positive relationships with existing clients. This rational along with the capabilities of the Internet also provides an excellent opportunity to form relationships with non-users. This is specifically important in the public sector where public taxes help to fund these services. Recognizing a need to communicate with non-users to inform them of the community benefits leisure is capable of, Crompton (2008) stated that "many taxpayers and elected officials believe much of the tax resource allocation to leisure services is used to deliver services to the small subpopulation of users" (p. 189), and do not consider the greater impacts. The power that the Internet provides in creating strong relationships presents an excellent opportunity for public officials to be responsive and accountable towards a wide array of citizens, both direct users and non-users. Taxes are used to support public programs but if they are targeted to a specific group why should everyone be paying, especial if that group is of middle to high income and able to pursue similar services in the open market. An issue central to public marketing comes from those who feel they have contributed to the resources (i.e., taxes) and are not seeing advantages when resources are not benefiting them directly. Simply put, if more community benefits can be communicated to non-users and other importation stakeholders, more public support and government funding will potentially come. If more funding is possible more leisure programs and services can be developed which will eventually touch a greater proportion of the whole. First, however, more sophisticated communication of leisure services is needed, which is why understanding online marketing is now so important, offering the tools to create an appealing Web presence for PLSA.

1.4 Online Benefits

Along with relationship building there are many other benefits associated with communicating online. First, the Web offers flexibility to make ongoing adjustments. A marketer can make last minute decisions on messages and design strategies. Second, modifications and updates can be made over time, as there are no restrictions from space or time associated with most traditional marketing media (Grantz, 1997). Interactivity and customization of online communication are also seen as very valuable benefits (Janal, 1998; Papacharissi, 2002). Papacharissi also argued that the interactivity of Web sites can help to increase the organizations' responsiveness. In 1997 Hall and Handel recognized that the interaction and responsiveness of Web applications can help provide convenient ways to market recreation programs.

1.5 Communication Background

"Communication can be defined as the passing of information, the exchange of ideas, or the process of establishing a commonness or oneness of thought between a sender and a receiver" (Belch & Belch, 2007, p.137). Successful communication will depend on the nature of the message, the receiver and the environment in which the message is sent. In 1948, Lasswell divided communication into four distinct factors known as source, message, channel and receiver.

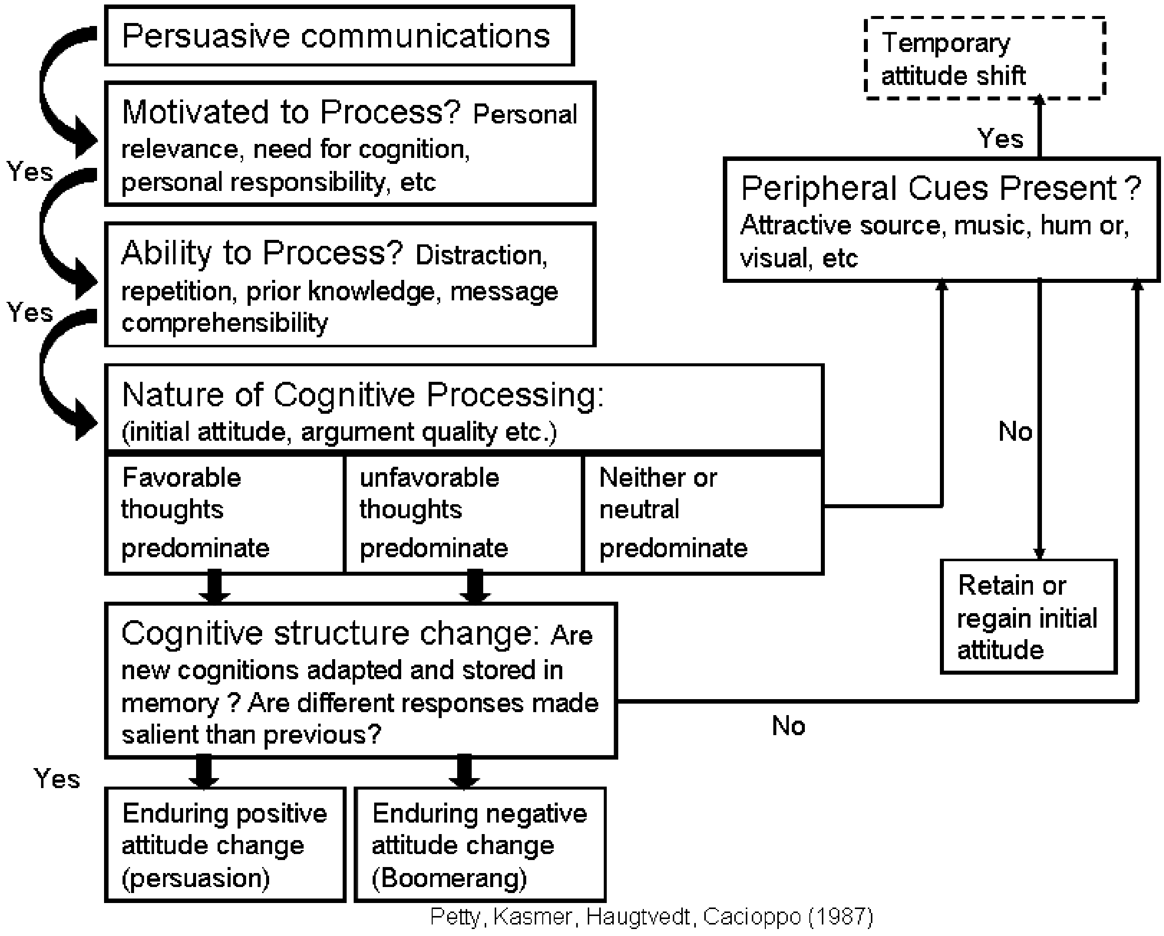
Source factors are the characteristics of the communicator such as biological attributes, behavioural features and personality traits. The most important source factors are the communicator's credibility and attractiveness, basically the legitimacy of the source. Can the communicator be trusted and do they have the knowledge to provide an opinion? The answers to these questions will affect the extent of attitude and behavioural change. Conversely, the receiver factor refers to the characteristics of the audience. Any attribute or combination of attributes that the receiver possesses will have an impact in contributing to the effectiveness of the message. It is often hard to determine if variations in successful communication are a result of contextual factors that the source and receiver bring with them, or the communication channel.

The communication channel is simply the means of communication. This can be face-to-face, writing, radio, television and, of course, the Internet. Finally, the message is the way the arguments are presented; are messages one or two sided and do they produce emotion or not? According to Ajzen (1992) this traditional framework leaves out one important factor because communication also depends on situational variables. Any given environment can bring a multitude of different situations. One's surroundings can distract or prepare the receiver for the message which, undoubtedly, has a large impact on the effects of communication.

1.5.1 Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion

In the early eighties, Petty and Cacioppo (1981) developed the Elaboration Likelihood Model of persuasion. They stated that a message could be transmitted and received through one of two routes of persuasion, the central route and the peripheral route (Figure 1). Petty and Cacioppo found that the receiver engaged in a process of analyzing and elaborating on the message. Contextual factors only affected persuasion when the receiver was motivated and/or had the ability to process the information. The degree of involvement that the receiver was willing to put forth would ultimately affect the strength of the message. When people are motivated and able to think about the content of the message, elaboration is high. The central persuasive route is likely to occur when elaboration is high. Conversely, the peripheral route is the likely result of low elaboration. Persuasion may also occur with low elaboration but it is often just temporary. The receiver is not guided by his or her assessment of the message, as in the case of the central route. Persuasion appears to be dependent on the effort a person puts into thinking about the arguments presented in the message.

Figure 1: Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion



McCarville (2002) referred to the Elaboration Likelihood Model while discussing communications for the delivery of leisure services. McCarville believed that communication channels send cues about the service but states there are “inherent limitations in the processing capacity of those who receive promotional messages…Clients may blend, fold, and manipulate information to fit their own preconceived notions” (p.108). Information that is similar to one's expectations will likely be accepted while information inconsistent with expectations will result in rejection.

The more a site can meet expectations of the user the more likely successful communication, or persuasion, will occur via the central route. This is more likely to result in persistent changes, as opposed to only temporary changes, and can have a great impact on participation. There is some evidence that Web sites attract a specific prospect who has a clearly demonstrated interest in an agency and is more responsive to persuasive messaging. Web sites are a highly recognizable form of persuasive technology allowing organizations that have not typically persuaded in the past to do so. Johnson Tew and Havitz (2002) suggested that persuasion was seldom systematically considered in municipally based leisure marketing research.

> Efforts to persuade people to do things such as visit a leisure facility, register for recreation classes, or systematic efforts to provide potential participants with the information necessary to participate represents important applications of promotion that are largely absent in the leisure literature (p. 77).

In addition to persuasive objectives, educational and informational intentions of communication should be addressed. Considering the various stages a client can go through when making a purchase decision, the goals or objectives of the communicator will change. Some messages are geared strictly towards educating prospective clients who may wish to learn more about a specific service; furthering their understand of the potential benefits that could be gained from participation. Educating helps to communicate the value of the main benefits or attractions (Crompton & Lamb, 1986). Informing messages are best intended for those consumers in the initial stages of their purchase decision (Sommers & Barnes, 2001). Crompton & Lamb added that informing messages offer the basics information of a product or service such as what, who, where, and when (Crompton & Lamb). Furthermore messages may be designed simply to remind the consumer about the service or product. Reassuring existing users of the personal and community benefits they accrue from participating helps reinforce future purchase decisions.

Internet users have come into a time where they are constantly confronted with advertising messages. Internet users have become more discriminating browsers and are quick to move off or through a Web site (Gantz, 1997). People see hundreds of marketing communications each day making it difficult to hold customers attention. The attention that a consumer will give to any one message is therefore extremely selective. Janal (1998) stated, “you are never going to get more attention from any customer than when they are online” (p.77). They have pre-selected the Web site and by doing so are interacting with the organization.

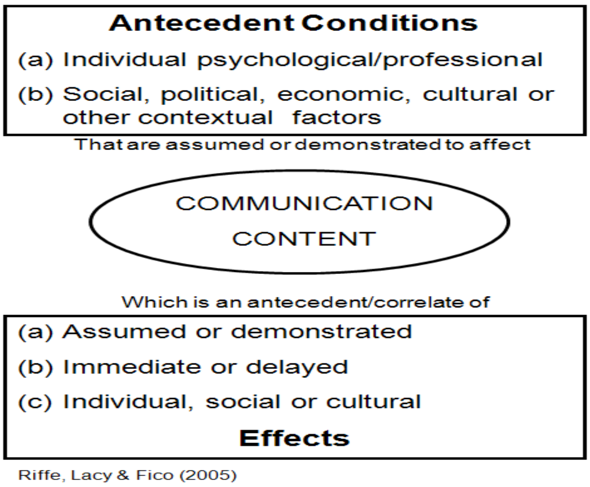
1.6 Theoretical Rationale

The theoretical rationale underlying this study was based on Petty and Cacioppo's (1981) Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion which assumes that central messages, those that require receivers to think, are aligned with their abilities, and cognitive processes are more likely to change attitude and behaviours. The current study however, did not examine attitudes and behaviours after exposure to PLSA Web pages. Doing so may have been premature, considering the lack of research regarding PLSA Web presence. Another option was to survey citizens regarding the quality and efficiency of PLSA Web sites in their communities. This idea was also rejected as premature given the leisure field's general lack of stated objectives regarding Web sites.

1.6.1 Content Analysis

It was decided it would be far more beneficial to first understand what Web sites accomplish for PLSA based on marketing and communication principles as well as online marketing criteria. Based on the Centrality Model of Communication, content analysis was the chosen method for the proposed study for the reason that content is understood "to be the cause of particular effects", as well as, "reflects the antecedent context or processes of its production" (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005. p 22). Figure 2 shows how inferences can be drawn about the consequences of message consumption or about the production of the content.

Figure 2: Centrality Model of Communication



This is particularly important, as the initial intention for this research was to highlight the need of persuasive messaging in PLSA. The antecedent conditions that PLSA tend to exist in play a huge part in the type of communication that they produce; often resulting strictly in informational content. This type of communication places limits on the potential effects to the receiver. Traditionally the persuasive nature of PLSA communication efforts has been rather weak.

Riffe et al. (2005) recognized that quantitative content analysis often represents the earliest study in an area. For example, Colley (1962) argued that "it is virtually impossible to measure the results of advertising (communication) - unless and until the specific results sought by advertising have been defined" (p.4).

1.6.2 Purpose

The purpose of this study was to initiate, using a marketing perspective, a preliminary understanding of the Web presence of Canadian PLSA. With the goal of obtaining data on the evidence of communication efforts in PLAS Web pages, this study attempted to obtain information on various design, electronic service quality and interaction standards. While maintaining a focus on leisure services, this study also attempted to gain information on The New Public Service, an approach used to understanding the role of government, thus helping to explore the communication connection Web sites generate between local government services and the community.

It is necessary to understand the existing Web presence of PLSA as it will provide a benchmark for future analysis, thus building a foundation for subsequent evaluative research. It will also help facilitate a starting point for any needed improvements and further practical applications. A stratified random sample of ten Canadian municipal Web sites was examined using a quantitative content analysis.

1.6.3 Research Questions

1. What is the current state of online communication efforts for PLSA?

    a) Does the Web presence of PLSA show evidence of a marketing strategy?

    b) Does the Web presence of PLSA show evidence of market segmentation?

    c) Is a coordinated use of the marketing mix elements evident within the Web presence of PLSA?

    d) Does the Web presence of PLSA show evidence of informing, persuading, educating and reminding?

e) Is a blend of the promotion mix evident within the Web presence of PLSA?

2. Does the Web presence of PLSA show evidence of The New Public Service approach?
3. How well designed is PLSA Web presence in terms of layout, maintenance and integration?
4. How well is the delivery of service quality in terms of efficiency, systems availability, fulfillment, privacy, responsiveness and customization within PLSA Web presence?
5. Does the Web presence of PLSA differ by region with respect to marketing/ communication efforts, new public service concepts, design and electronic service quality?

Chapter 2
Literature Review

2.1 Outline

The literature review presented in this chapter will consist of the following sections: The Internet, Marketing Perspective, Promotion and Communication, Public Leisure Services, The New Pubic Service, The Diversity of Web sites and Evaluating Web sites. These topics created a context for the study by outlining current and previous research in related areas. They also helped to define Web presence, which was the term chosen to encompass all the concepts used in the research questions that helped to examine online activity of PLSA.

2.2 The Internet

Originally developed in 1969, the Internet began as a communications device to allow government to send messages in case of military fallout (Gantz, 1997). In the 70s and 80s a small, but growing, number of governmental employees and academics conducted use on the Internet (Gantz, 1997). With the creation of Web browsers in the 90s the Internet was transformed. Web browsers now allow non-technical people to access the World Wide Web relatively easily. Virtually all types of organizations benefit from the Internet by selling products and services (Janal, 1998). Just over two-thirds of Canadian adults use the Internet. According to the 2005 Canadian Internet Use Survey, Internet participation in Canada reached nearly 68%.

Internet surfing was originally a leisure activity. It began with users seeking entertainment on the Web, but changes were notable by the late 90s when users were increasingly using the Internet for online shopping or to assist in decision making. Over time the Internet has become the most convenient form of accessing information.

2.2.1 Benefits of Internet Communication

Online information should be interactive and immediate. Organizations are becoming better at individualizing their products and services, messages, and media over the Internet. As well, information is being customized that targets audiences with different lifestyle interests (i.e., children, parents, students), that other media cannot. Internet users can create a dialog with the company to obtain information that answers their questions quickly, accurately and personally (Janal, 1998). Interactive Web sites allow customers to control their interaction with an organization to create exactly the configuration of information, products and/or services they desire (Janal, 1998; Papacharissi, 2002). With the use of hypertext, this has become an easy and manageable task. Hypertext is a feature that allows users to go from one piece of information to another at their own choice (Web trends, 2007). They do not have to go through an entire document to get the information they need. The Internet will allow for as much or as little information to be accessed, as the user needs. Users should expect communication to be interactive and to find answers to questions quickly, resulting in highly customized messages.

Along with interaction and customization, the flexibility of the Internet is another strength of which marketers can take advantage (Gantz, 1997). Information on a Web site can be modified and updated in a matter of minutes. Overall, “user-friendly Web sites with rich, interesting and searchable contents will ultimately win customers' approval, encouraging use and return visits” (Kuk, 2002, p.356).

The most common reason users visit Web sites is to find information to assist in decision making (Kotler et al., 2005). This can be seen as a great opportunity for public marketers who normally have to push information onto citizens. The request for information is now created by the users, not the marketer. With the use of the Internet, marketers and public administrators have the chance to present detailed information about their products or services “to a willing and receptive audience” (Kotler et al., 2005, p.90). Surfing Web sites allows users to do comparative shopping, search for alternative information and search for data, pictures, and testimonials when investigating products and services online. In most cases when purchasing or registering online, it is easy and consumers can be assured that their personal information is kept private.

Regardless of a motivation to purchase a product or register for a service, obtaining information is also crucial in creating relationships. In a public service context the potential in engage and to create relationships between citizen and agency is an excellent benefit when optimizing Internet capacities. Through investments of citizen involvement, citizens are seeking greater responsiveness and an increase in trust from public officials. As stated previously, the use of Web sites allows interaction to happen easily. Government can now be more responsive simply by communicating through the Internet, finding out what citizens' needs are from the citizens themselves. An open dialog can exist between both parties. The

Internet is able to assist in equalizing control over services and enhancing interaction and involvement between the government and community.

2.2.2 Internet User

There are many terms used to describe Internet users. The language chosen to describe users can become very complex when looking at the relationship that each different user may have with an organization. Although terms are often used interchangeably, it is recognized that different meanings are associated with them and it was with best intent that each term used in this study appeared in the appropriate context.

When discussing the diversity of users, the language chosen depends on the context at hand. Many of the terms used are mentioned both in a commercial and public sector context. Throughout this study an emphasis will be placed on public services, however, many of the terms used are terms rooted in a commercial context. Due to the marketing nature of this study words such as client, customer, and consumer are often used simply because of the association with the marketing and communication literature. Citizen, however, is also used because of the public service focus. All too often when discussing public services, the term citizen has been replaced with customer. Many believe this reduces citizenship to a narrow self-interested consumer-ship. People who consider themselves as consumers tend to have certain expectations and those people who identify themselves as citizens have other expectations. Denhardt and Denhardt (2001) argued that consumers focus on their own limited desires and wishes and how to satisfy them, while citizens focus on the common good and the long-term interest of the community.

The Internet allows a multitude of diverse people to seek information and experiences, allowing just about anyone to access huge amounts of information with just a few clicks of a mouse. The Internet population is becoming increasingly representative of the Canadian population (Kotler et al., 2005). Still, users are disproportionately younger, more affluent, and better educated (Gantz, 1997). Among adults, highest use of the Internet is seen in those who are 18-24 years old.

Young adults, recognized by Kotler and colleagues (2005) as Generation Y (the children of the Baby Boomers) are quite fluent and comfortable with computers, digital and Internet technology. The Generation Y population was the first to grow up surrounded by digital media whether it be at home, school or for pure entertainment purposes. Kotler et al. argued that the culture that this generation has created will eventually be superimposed on the rest of society. It is extremely important for organizations, both in the private and public sectors, to give attention to this young adult audience. As they begin working and their buying power increases this segment is predicted to have huge market influences; spending discretionary resources on products and services for work, home and recreational pursuits (Gantz, 1997). Also, young adults will soon be parents and according to Howard and Madrigal (1990), parents are gatekeepers for young children's recreation and leisure participation.

The average online user is better educated and has more disposable income than the average American (Janal, 1998). The Internet currently does cater to more upscale, stable users. Low income populations still have less access to the Internet, leaving these people less informed about products, services and prices (Kuk, 2002). The existing evidence suggests that income, education and age are important social determinates of Internet access and that older people and those with low incomes are less likely to use the Internet (Cukier & Middleton, 2003; Kuk). Using information technology requires skills, knowledge, and resources to do so (Butt & Taylor, 2000). Many people are still afraid of the Internet or uncomfortable because they believe they will not understand the technology or the jargon. Nevertheless, as more and more people find their way onto the Internet, users are becoming more of a diverse population. "Now nearly every socioeconomic group is aggressively adopting the Web" (Kotler et al., 2005, p.92).

2.3 Marketing Perspective

The very thought of marketing public leisure programs can often produce adverse reaction among participants, professionals and other citizens (McCarville, 2002). It is "believed that marketing like consumerism, is inherently a process of exploitation" (McCarville, p. xv). The association consumerism has to marketing is a result of past and present marketing orientation practices which were used to entice people to buy, often misleading the consumer to purchase. The fear that marketing leisure services will focus "its energies on income generating potential" and away from a "public good" (Pedlar, 1996) worries many citizens, leisure professionals and academics.

The rooted values in the marketing concept are ultimately what misguide the concept in so many ways when discussing the public sector. Marketing is a concept that came out of the private sector with a distinct goal to increase demand for goods. McCarville (2002) traced the transition of the marketing concept from product oriented to client oriented stating that it was “the producer who initiated the marketing process” (p.4). In the height of the industrial revolution both services and products were seen as tools to influence desired behaviours and buyers were seen as secondary. It was like this for decades until people started to reject the idea of marketing for feelings of being influenced and encouraged to buy. They felt fooled and the trust in the producer was gone, attaching commercialism to marketing. Producers were not able to sustain long-term relationships with any buyer; no one was winning. Noted first in the 1960s, it became clear that the integration of the consumer was going to be needed for marketing practices. Consumers were seen as a pivotal partner in any “meaningful marketing endeavour” (McCarville, p. 5). Moreover, the end result is a process very appealing to the consumer. What once was product driven is now client driven, companies are discovering what the client wants and using the necessary resources to provide it.

It was a slow process before marketing techniques turned to incorporate the desires of the consumer into their practice. Even so, concerns over equity cause confusion with the marketing concepts in the public sector (Crompton & Lamb, 1986). Marketing is a product of the private sector as is commercialism and if utilized in public services can give the impression that leisure can be bought and sold. It is well recognized that this could lead to the marginalizing of disadvantaged people, as well as diminishing the leisure experience itself. This is especially evident when price is used. If leisure becomes something that can be bought and sold and has the potential for marginalization, community is likely to suffer. A dominant Canadian view is that leisure is something that should be, “a personally chosen, self-fulfilling experience" (Karlis, 2004, p.29). Therefore, a fear or resentment toward marketing practices in the public sector is somewhat justified. The idea that others have control over leisure experiences is threatening.

The introduction of marketing into recreation and leisure was primarily through the efforts of Crompton and colleagues (Crompton & Lamb, 1986; Howard & Crompton, 1980), who suggested that the misconception of marketing has, in part, lead to an inaccurate view. Although some academics are predominant in their efforts to uphold marketing as a positive concept for PLSA (Havitz,1988; Havitz, 2000; McCarville, 2002) much of their work has been on efforts to communicate the advantages of marketing in the public sector and to facilitate a genuine understanding of the concept. According to Havitz, (1988) marketing is a set of "neutral tools" that can be used for assistance of any goal, whether it is a goal of the public, humanistic viewpoint, or private capitalist commercial organizations. Likewise, McCarville argued that marketing is ultimately a process of exchanging between two parties, both resulting in satisfaction from the exchange. Furthermore, marketing is simply a series of interrelated activities that focus on the client. According to Crompton and Lamb (1986), "marketing is first a philosophy, an attitude and a perspective. Second, it is the set of activities used to implement that philosophy" (p.1). It is the acceptance of the philosophy that leads to "successful implementation".

In a recent definition, Kotler et al. (2005) described marketing as a "social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and values with others" (p.6). This indicates that marketing can be used for social issues and that it is not only a product that is being exchanged, but values as well.

2.3.1 Tempered and Social Marketing

A similar evolution can be noted in the public sector with an end result more commonly referred to as social marketing (McCarville, 1999). Societal and social marketing have emerged as two primary adoptions of marketing principles to enhance public welfare. Like pure marketing, societal marketing focuses on satisfying the needs of the client, that have been imparted on the agency by the client, (or more appropriately, imparted by the citizen) but aims to achieve this in a way that also maintains or improves the individual's and society's well being (Kotler et al., 2005). The concept of societal marketing has recently been termed *tempered* marketing by Havitz and Crompton (2008). They defined tempered marking as “the justification for an agency’s existence in the satisfaction of clients’ wants and the preservation or enhancement of the community’s well-being” (p.22).

Community interest represents an important, but secondary, element in tempered marketing. By contrast, within the social marketing model community interest is the starting point. “Social marketing is the use of marketing principles and techniques to influence a target audience to voluntarily accept, reject, modify, or abandon a behaviour for the benefit of individuals, groups or society as a whole” (Kotler & Lee, 2007, p.191). Social marketing efforts are typically conducted in public sector agencies, and some non-profit organizations. Parks and Recreation Departments and community services have been known to sponsor social marketing efforts (Bright, 2000; Kotler & Lee). Kaczynski (2008) recognized that, although seldom referenced in the leisure literature, social marketing offers a more appropriate strategy for the marketing of many PLSA service and goals.

The intent of social marketing is to improve the quality of life for both the individual and the community as a whole. Simply put, it involves the use of marketing techniques to promote social change (Havtiz & Crompton, 2008). Behaviours are often the focus of social marketing; the marketer is not done until the behaviours have been changed (Maibach, Rothschild, & Novelli, 2002). Social marketing can be used for injury prevention, influencing citizens to protect the environment, to enhance community life and, most often, in the area of health awareness. Efforts concerning health have been used for a number of reasons, such as to increase participation in physical activity or other leisure endeavours that contribute to overall wellness.

2.3.2 Relationship Marketing

It is important to note, however, that when discussing marketing in a leisure context a different approach to marketing is often needed. The communication activities undertaken in PLSA are often that of service marketing. Service marketing takes on different characteristics than that of product marketing. The intangible nature of services makes it hard for customers to evaluate them prior to delivery (McCarville, 2002). Consumers look for clues to judge the quality of a service but because there is nothing directly to see or hold like one would have in product goods, service goods are often judged by communication cues.

The attention to service quality in service marketing has led to a growing interest in relationship marketing (Berry, 1995). Relationship marketing is focused on loyalty, by placing an emphasis on the retention of current clients and it has potential to provide added benefits to both the agency and the client (Berry, 1995). An early definition of relationship marketing was offered by Berry (1983) as "attracting, maintaining and in multi-service organizations, enhancing customer relationships" (p. 25). The reality that services are growing and that customers are forming relationships with people (service providers) rather than goods creates many opportunities for relationship marketing practices.

Benefits of relationship marketing are somewhat more obvious for the agency than the benefits consumers receive. Loyalty, the overall benefit, can lead to increased revenue, predictability, low client turnover, word of mouth communication and a decrease in service costs (Reichheld, 1993). Gwinner, Gremler and Bitner (1998) examined the benefits that customers receive from relationship marketing and found that benefits can be categorized into three types: confidence, social and special treatment. Within a leisure context Kaczynski and Havitz (2001) concluded that the same three benefits are sought when developing a relationship with a service provider; confidence, social and special treatment benefits. This was found consistent, in that order, across all service sectors, with special treatment expectations being especially low in PLSA context. The most important benefit was confidence in your provider, which can be described as a psychological benefit including trust, security, and feelings of comfort. Moreover, opportunities for relationship marketing are plentiful for PLSA with the number of activities that require face to face delivery with providers, such as sport, fitness and fine arts programs.

The idea of using marketing practices in community leisure programs has grown in recent years (Johnson Tew et al., 1999). However, when developing programs and services for public leisure, issues of equity are always a concern. “In democratic societies, issues of equity and fairness are very much at stake in terms of how publicly funded leisure service organizations do (or ought to do) business” (Scott, 2005, p. 279). The need to design programs that can reach the greatest number of community members is extremely challenging. According to Hemingway (1999), “programs must be structured in a way that not only maximize genuine citizen participation in policy and general operation decisions but that also expand citizen ability to participate more fully in the future” (p.157).

In 2000, Johnson Tew recognized that the general public may not support expenditures for communication. Due to limited resources, marketing efforts must be strategic in how they communicate. In 2008 Crompton stated that “user benefits are unconvincing to many non-users and elected officials who are ambivalent or opposed to using public tax dollars to fund programs that offer benefits only to a limited number of users” (p.188). Public officials must aim to be open, accessible, and responsive when serving citizens and create opportunities for citizenship and relationship building. Consequently, trust is needed to build such a relationship. It is becoming increasingly important to ensure that principles of democracy, social equity and trust are maintained when creating relationships in the public sector. (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2001).

2.3.3 Marketing Mix

When marketing strategies have been set an organization can begin planning their marketing mix. The marketing mix is a set of tools that an organization can use to produce the desired responses of the target audience (Kotler et al., 2005). The various tools are groups of variables traditionally known as the “four Ps”: product (program), place (distribution), price and promotion (communication). Product refers to the set of benefits associated with the desired behaviour or service usage. A product is comprised of facilities and or services that have been designed to deliver the benefits sought by the client group (Crompton & Lamb 1986). Kotler and Lee (2007) distinguished between the core product (what people will gain when they perform the behaviour) and the actual product (the desired behaviour). Place, also considered distribution, refers to how, where and when services reach the client group. Place includes the actual physical location of these outlets, operating hours, general attractiveness and comfort, and accessibility. Price is what users give up in order to obtain the service (Crompton & Lamb). Price usually encompasses both monetary and non-monetary cost. Intangibles such as, embarrassment, loss of time, and the psychological hassle and effort should all be considered as well as direct monetary expenditures. Pricing strategies can often be very dynamic as price levels need to adjust according to factors such as supply and demand. Promotion, the most visible component of the marketing mix, helps to facilitate exchanges by transmitting communication (Crompton & Lamb) and will be described in further detail in the following section. Any effective marketing program will use all four of these elements to better achieve the organization's marketing objectives and to deliver value to the consumer.

2.3.3.1 Expanded Marketing Mix

In recent years, the popularity of service marketing has led to an expansion of the marketing mix. Zeithhaml and Bitner (2003) concluded that because services are both consumed simultaneously (meaning that the customer is present in the service exchange process) and are intangible, additional variables are needed to further communicate with and satisfy the client. Marketers have adopted an expanded version of the marketing mix to include people, physical evidence and process.

According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) “people” refers to all the human actors who influence the service encounter. Despite technological advancements many services still require direct interaction. People can include agency personnel, the customer themselves and other customers who may be present. Any tangible component that helps to facilitate the service encounter is considered physical evidence (Zeithhaml & Bitner, 2003). This can include the appearance of buildings, landscape, equipment, signs, furnishings, and contact personnel. Process, however, refers to the service delivery and operating systems. It is the operational flow of activities that produce the service (Zeithhaml & Bitner). A poorly designed process can lead to ineffective service delivery and a disappointing experience (Lovelock & Wirtz 2007). Lovelock and Wirtz expanded further and included one last variable known as productivity and quality. They stated that “productivity and quality should be seen as two sides of the same coin; no organization can afford to address one in isolation”

(p. 25). The efficiency of service inputs to outputs coupled with meeting customers' needs, wants and expectations is the basis for productivity and quality. Together with the original 4 Ps these eight elements must work cohesively for success in any competitive service businesses.

2.4 Promotion and Communication

A primary focus for this study was promotion and communication. “Promotion of public leisure services is perhaps the least studied, and most misunderstood, aspect of the marketing mix” (Johnson Tew, 2000, p.2). In everyday language, advertising, promotion and marketing are often used synonymously. Yet, over 20 years ago, Crompton and Lamb (1986) emphasized that promotion was not synonymous with marketing. Promotion is only one of the four basic elements of the traditional marketing mix. Still today it is important to emphasis that without effective decisions in programming, pricing and distribution of services, promotion alone cannot create successful services. Promotion decisions are only made after the other three P's of the marketing mix have been considered (Kotler & Lee, 2007).

When taking a customer's viewpoint, the four original Ps can be translated into the four C's: customer solution, customer cost, convenience, and communication. This is notable here as the term promotion, the last P in the marketing mix, and communication are used interchangeably. In recent years the term promotion has been replaced with communication. The term communication is commonly used when referring to all the efforts an organization makes to contact potential and current consumers (Kotler, 2005).

Communication strategies are important for all organizations, including PLSA. Communication helps facilitate exchanges with present and potential clients and plays a key role in positioning an organization's products and services in the minds of consumers, against what other organizations have to offer. Organizations use communication to assist prospective clients in their decision making process and to make their products and services more attractive to them (Sommers & Barnes, 2001).

Successful communication can help increase revenue, increase service utilization and product purchases and improve client satisfaction (Kotler & Lee, 2007). By informing, educating, persuading and reminding, the overall aim of communication is for present and potential clients to recognize the offer, believe in the stated benefits and become further motivated to act. This will facilitate exchanges with the organization.

2.4.1 Communication Objectives

As a pivotal component of the marketing mix, promotion (communication) is the part closest to the consumer. Promotion is an exercise in communication and is often defined as having four objectives: informing, educating, reminding and persuading (Crompton & Lamb, 1986). The selection and importance of the objective will vary based on the circumstances of the organization.

Once the promotional program and method have been selected, communication objectives can be established that are congruent with previous marketing mix decisions. Communication objectives facing organizations and businesses will vary from service to service and over time depending on the different stages a client can go though when making a service decision.

Crompton and Lamb (1986) labelled five stages a client can go through when making a service decision as The Program Adaptation Process. The stages of the Program Adaptation Process are: awareness, interest, evaluation or trial, decision and confirmation. If clients are in an awareness stage, informing may be the best intent for promotional efforts. Crompton & Lamb stated that the interest stage can be characterized by actively seeking out information. This is a time when communication should focus on persuading. They included a fourth communication objective, educating, stating that some consumers need more sufficient information surrounding a product or a service, for a higher level of understanding.

2.4.1.1 Informing

Information objectives are commonly used to introduce new products or services; “the objective is to build primarily demand” (Kotler et al., 2005). Basic information such as; what, who, where (location), when (date and time), costs and how (registration), help users make decisions. A well-designed program or service is unlikely to be successful if target audiences are not initially made aware of the essential information. However, Johnson Tew et al. (1999) argued that traditional PLSA rely too often on informative communications in the sense that other stages are often minimized or ignored.

2.4.1.2 Educating

Central to the idea of educating is the communication of benefits. Crompton and Lamb (1986) believe that some market segments must first be educated about a product or service before they can be persuaded. Communicating the value of the main benefit or attractions will help develop a better level of understanding that can move consumers to the next level of the Program Adaptation Process or purchase decision. For example, a PLSA could communicate the social aspects of a fitness class, instead of the idea of exercise. Or the benefits of being outdoors and close to nature could be communicated as opposed to simple lists and maps featuring available running trails.

When discussing online communication, Kotler et al. (2005) encourage Web site marketers to add real value to the consumers' experience. By going above the required amount of information, or providing helpful hints and service examples, organizations can enrich the time users spend online. The key to designing effective Web sites is to create enough value to get consumers to come back.

2.4.1.3 Persuading

Agencies using persuasive objectives will want to change attitudes and convince people to take action. The persuasive components of a promotional message will ultimately facilitate the motivation to act by the receiver (Ajzen, 1992). Without persuasive elements a consumer's motivation to act will be low. Communicating benefits is just as important in persuasive messages as it is for educational messages (Crompton & Lamb, 1986).

There are a wide variety of possible persuaders including quality, uniqueness, a recognized presence, special price, convenience of location, pleasant atmosphere, opportunity for personal enrichment and social satisfaction (Crompton & Lamb, 1986). The importance of these will vary depending on service and target markets. Sommers and Barnes (2001) emphasized the importance of message appearance when attempting to persuade stating, “text will most often be forgotten, so one must rely on images, colours, and shapes to elicit a positive emotional response” (p. 580). They also recognized that sound can help hold receivers' attention; music is a key element for most any attractive sounds.

As implied, persuasion may refer to generating interest in the activity itself, but more often in convincing a potential client that the program offered represents the best option. Havitz and Crompton (1990) examined persuasive messaging and its influence on choosing a leisure provider in both public and private sectors. They concluded that persuasive communication can influence people's decisions to choose services offered in both public and commercial sector suppliers, highlighting that persuasive messaging has the ability to motivate in a leisure context. In 1999, Johnson Tew et al. found that it was not uncommon for PLSA messages to have persuasive elements, but that few communication efforts focused specifically on that aspect.

2.4.1.4 Reminding

Service users must also be reminded about availability of services and potential satisfaction they could gain from these services. Even the most established agencies need to constantly remind people about their services to retain a place in their mind (Sommers &

Barnes, 2001). Reminding messages should be designed to position the product or service in the mind of the consumer during off-seasons or periods of non-use (Kotler et al., 2005).

Crompton & Lamb (1986) viewed reminding as an opportunity to reassure existing users of the personal and community benefits they accrue from participating, as well as demonstrating appreciation for their patronage. This is important for confirming and reinforcing future purchase decisions.

2.4.2 Promotional Mix

When describing objectives for communication, Kotler et al. (2005) referred to advertising objectives. Advertising, however, is only one method used in promotion to inform, educate, persuade and remind. There are many options for delivering promotion. Advertising, personal communication, incentives or sales promotion and publicity, commonly referred to as the promotion mix, are four approaches used in both the private and public sectors to deliver messages. Each one of these methods can be used as a tool to help assist in promotional efforts. Kotler and colleagues recognized that organizations typically use more than one method and suggest a requirement for balance between the promotional mix methods to ensure consistency in an organization's messages. For example, if a public recreation centre is communicating free Sunday night basketball sessions for all girls aged 12-15 and a public service announcement on a local radio station informed that the same recreation centre was offering free Sunday night sessions for males only, confusion may occur. Receivers are likely to feel uncertain about who the free sessions are for, thus negatively affecting their motivation to take part in the basketball program.

When communicating in the online environment, the distinctions between the promotion mix elements tend to blur (Janal, 1998). Online marketers should be comfortable with blending advertising, public relations, incentives and even personal selling (often through the use of e-mail) when promoting online.

2.4.2.1 Advertising Online

Kotler et al. (2005) may be inaccurate in stating that the communication objectives are particular to advertising. However, this study did employ a focus on advertising due to existent knowledge about how advertising messages are sent and received. The PLSA Web pages to be evaluated in this study will be treated as a form of advertising, in the way that advertising communication impacts and affects the receiver (the user of the site). Vakratsas and Ambler (1999) suggest that there are three components related to how advertisement is received: experiences, cognition (thinking), and affect (feeling). Experiences include prior interaction and past communication experiences with a product or service. Cognition, the thinking component, is based on the idea that consumers decisions are assisted by the information provided. The affect component, on the other hand, is decisions based on consumers feelings evoked from a message. Vakratsas & Ambler argued that to formulate the best communication efforts, marketers must understand how advertising works and how it affects consumers.

Historically, advertising has been defined as “any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor” (Kotler & Lee, 2007, p. 151). Traditional advertising is seen as the most persuasive tool of the promotion mix and allows the marketer to reach large audiences frequently (Kotler & Lee). Yet, the traditional definition of adverting has to be modified in order to translate online. First, messages on Web site are often very personalized. Marketers can personalize and respond to messages very easily. “Non-personal messages on the Internet may, indeed be advertising. But, personalized messages may be advertising as well” (Gantz, 1997, p.9). Second, the Internet represents a space that is open and nearly free for all**.** Gantz noted that while there are costs in creating and maintaining Web sites, the only significant cost is when advertisements are placed on another's site. Therefore, comparatively few online messages are paid for.

Online advertising can be an effective addition to other marketing efforts used in leisure services such as print media or television. Utilizing the Internet for advertising allows an opportunity for dramatization through sight, sound or motion. It is important to remember that Web sites still play only a minor role in most leisure organizations' promotion mix. With the increase of importance being placed on Web sites in recent years, it is likely that the Internet will become a larger component of leisure organizations' communication efforts.

2.4.3 Internet Marketing

Internet marketing is an organization's effort to inform, educate, persuade and remind users about products and services over the Internet. All the Internet-based activities that take place to enable an exchange with a consumer can be considered Internet marketing. Parsons, Zeisser and Waitman (1998) viewed digital marketing as an opportunity to create new forms of interaction between consumer and provider, as well as integrate interactive media with the elements in the marketing mix. Furthermore, Internet marketing calls for a new set of marketing rules for effective use. If organizations wish to grow and prosper in the online environment, “conducting business in the new digital age will call for a new model of marketing strategy and practice” (Kotler et al., 2005, p.88).

Internet marketing stems from traditional marketing concepts, yet the major difference is the flow and direction of communication. In 1998, Janal acknowledged the new direction the Internet was sending marketing. He stated that traditional marketing tends to target more of a passive receiver, whereas Internet marketing targets those who actively select which sites they will visit and what information they will receive. Online tools have helped to make marketing more efficient. Communication can now be two-way and pages can easily be created to reflect a specific individual preference. Instead of sending messages to a targeted audience that will either dismiss or act on the message, online marketing allows consumers to seek out information. Janal added that it is the Web user who is the initiator of the communication not the advertiser.

An online marketer should be in communication with the rest of the organization to ensure the appropriate material is on the Web sites. They will have the technology to do so but, there needs to be guidelines and objectives for them to meet. Internet marketing should support the entire marketing program (Janal, 1998). Any marketing done online should be used in conjunction with the entire marketing program; it is not the only tool. Kotler and Lee, (2007) stated that it is imperative to ensure an integrative marketing approach, one that coordinates communication across all communication tools and channels (i.e., that the brochure look and feel the same as your Web site). It is also wise to have off-line advertisement of the site; directing users to the site may be incorporated into the other tools used in the marketing program.

2.5 Public Leisure Services

Examples of public leisure programs and services for this context included municipal parks and trails, swimming pools, playground programs, fitness facilities, sports and physical activities, arts and cultural activities and educational programs and courses. These can be categorized as general offerings of local Recreation and Leisure Departments and public community centers. The amount of tax money required to develop and operate recreation and leisure facilities, programs and services is often reduced by charges and user fees (Searle & Brayley, 2000) which, for the majority of offerings, are the case. Parks, trails and other open public spaces, in most localities, are usually the exception to charges and fees.

A major role of the public sector is to provide programs and services that neither the private nor not for profit sectors want to manage with their resources. This can often result in a number of programs designed to assist financially underprivileged people (Kotler & Lee, 2007). Within the popular area of leisure and recreation, programs are widely offered in both the not for profit and private sectors. This not only creates increased competition for the public sector it also poses a great challenge. The public sector should meet the growing needs of their users while maintaining open opportunities for all.

2.5.1 Past Communication Efforts

Interactive brochures, commonly used in many PLSA Web sites are less expensive to produce than print versions. Even so, in 1999 Johnson Tew, et al. revealed that PLSA typically used printed forms of communication as opposed to other forms. The most frequently used communication channel in the public sector is printed material, which is commonly recognized as brochures, flyers, posters, newsletters, booklets and calendars. Johnson Tew et al. argued that approximately two thirds of the communication efforts at that time consisted of printed material. The program awareness that these brochures create for the general public provides enough rational for continued funding (Johnson Tew & Havitz, 2002).

There are, however, a number of potential problems with relying too heavily on seasonal brochures and other forms of printed material. First, people prefer to get only the information they want without having to read through the whole document. It is unlikely to attract those who are uninterested or disinterested with only a brochure, as the context is untargeted. Second, brochures cannot reach those who cannot read or have trouble reading and it is difficult to produce a seasonal brochure in more than one language. One of the major barriers to communication is language (Belch & Belch, 2007). Yet, it is very common within Web sites to provide a preferred language option to cater to multiple languages. Third, environmental issues are also of concern for public sector marketers. What are the effects on the environment at the cost of serving consumer needs and wants? When care is taken for the environment all components of the marketing mix should be taken into account. Advertisers have often been accused of adding to the waste problem with direct mail, or news flyers (Kotler et al., 2005). Lastly, it is difficult to include anything but information in a seasonal brochure and an agency will have a hard time trying to educate or persuade with only printed material.

In their 2002 study, Johnson Tew and Havitz suggested that PLSA should utilize Web sites as ways to expand communication efforts and to integrate their communication efforts as much as possible. Web sites should include reference to the other communication strategies of the agency. Johnson Tew and Havitz stated that Web sites can contain the same information as a printed brochure with the added benefits of online technology. As well, Web sites can help expand services provided for the citizen such as, online registration, leisure benefit of the day, notifications and cancellations and offer multiple languages.

The utilization of the Internet as a means to provide communication presents opportunities to the public sector to better fulfill the needs of their users (McIvor, McHuge, & Cadden, 2002). Within the field of leisure studies the Internet has been given little attention. The research that does exist has typically been concerned with the Internet as a leisure experience. This research focused on the Internet as a means of providing multiple leisure spaces that support a variety of leisure activities; transforming the contemporary experience and organization of leisure (Bryce, 2001). A decade ago, Jackson (1999) recognized that leisure scholars have had little to say about the growing phenomenon of the Internet. “Leisure researchers have been less eager than other scholars and scientists to embrace the new opportunities offered by the Internet” (Jackson, p.19). Still today his remarks remain largely relevant. “More and more tourism organizations have realized that Internet marketing is becoming an inseparable, oftentimes a determining, part of their overall endeavour” (Wang & Fesenmaier 2006, p.239). Effective use of information technology is pivotal for marketing and communication-related activities. It could easily be said that this is true for PLSA as well. With the use of interactive technology the Internet allows for an opportunity to engage and enable citizens.

2.6 The New Public Service

Evidence suggests that public leisure services are often internally driven (Johnson Tew, et al. 1999) which seems contradictory to the general mandates used to guide many of these agencies. This is unfortunate due to the opportunities for relationships that could be created if a participatory process existed between the community and leisure providers. Glover (2004) states, “the new leisure centers, now so common in most communities, concentrate almost exclusively on cost recovery and serving consumer interest” (p. 64). Citizens passively consume without any focus on a collaborative process for the improvement of community. According to Labonte (2005) this type of practice would be considered community based programming, where an externally based agency defines the problems of a community and develops strategies for remedy. The citizen acting more as an outside participator or like a consumer, reinforcing the recipient’s reliance on professionals to provide program services that meets their leisure needs (Glover).

In the past, government played what was known as the steering role of society where private-sector and business approaches were used in the public sector. This role was referred to as the New Public Management. According to Denhardt and Denhardt (2001), within the New Public Management, government operated like a business and not only adopted business practices but values as well (e.g., self-interest, competition, the market, and an entrepreneurial spirit).

If more of a participatory process existed between the community and leisure providers, opportunities for social capital may exist. Social capital refers "to the connection among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (Putnam, 2000 p.19); it can be seen as a "public good".

According to Denhardt and Denhardt (2000), a new role of government, The New Public Service singled a shift in how we think about the role of public administrators. It describes the relationship between the state and citizen in terms of democratic citizenship. "The New Public Service is a set of ideas about the role of public administration in the governance system that places citizens at the center" (p. 550). Today many groups and interests are involved in developing and implementing public policy, where the individual is playing a more active role in self-government. Public administrators' responsibility is to serve citizens by overseeing public resources. They must be aware of other sources, support and assistance ensuring that one sector does not dominate the others.

To have productive cooperation, both trust and reciprocity are needed. Creating relationships between exchange partners could be considered a necessary requirement for any New Public Service Role, as relationship building is very fundamental to successful reciprocity. It has been recognized in marketing as well as community research that a sustainable relationship, one where reciprocity is evident, is beneficial for both parties. In The New Public service, shared leadership, collaboration and empowerment become the norm both inside and outside the organization" (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000, p.556).

2.6.1 E- Government

The 2006 Survey of Electronic Commerce and Technology reported that 94.4 percent of Canadian public sector agencies have a Web site (Statistics Canada, 2006b). Most Canadian government organizations, from federal to municipal, are now online, making it easier for the general public to interact with them. Most of the services are encompassed under a term called *E-government,* which is the "concept of using information and communications technologies (IT), networked computers and the Internet, in particular, to improve government services, streamline internal administrative processes, and enhance opportunities for citizens to engage with government" (Longford, 2002, p.1). This change has had a major impact on the way public agencies interact with their users. In spite of the large use of the Internet in the public sector, research would suggest there is still room to grow in the online environment.

2.6.2 Sector Digital Divide

Private organizations stress the importance of developing communication messages based on the unique profile and characteristics of your target audience. Targeting specific population groups is difficult for PLSA and is seldom carried out (Johnson Tew et al., 1999; McCarville, 2002). Web sites make for a comfortable way to overcome some of the difficulties in target marketing for leisure services. In fact, in 1994 with the advancement of Web technologies, it was predicted that agencies would move from segmenting specific marketing groups to segmenting by individual households (Berry, 1994).

Private sector organizations see online promotion as a necessary investment while some public sector organizations have viewed it as unnecessary. A number of public sector agencies have adopted Internet technologies to be responsive to the needs of their citizens (McIvor et al., 2002). The gap between those with regular, effective access to information technology and those without access has been referred to as the “digital divide”. According to Cukier and Middleton (2003), a digital divide is also evident between profit and non-profit service sectors. They identified the ways in which private and non-profit organizations compete in human services and health care, and recognized how social marketing programs pit community organizations against private sector companies. Citizens have received high quality service in the private sector and, as a result, expectations for quality service in the public sector have risen (Crompton & Lamb, 1986). McIvor et al added that in the future, expectations will continue to rise with increasing demand for efficient and effective online accessibility to organizations.

Although many public agencies have adopted Internet technologies, it has been argued that limited Internet benefits have been obtained in the public sector due to such issues as poor operating systems (McIvor et al., 2002) and issues concerning maintenance costs. Huge amounts of money are being spent on updating and maintaining Web sites. Yet, the Internet is considered the least expensive marketing tool as well as the most cost effective

(Janal, 1998). Organizations can create an online presence, showcase their products and services, interact and communicate with users all for a small investment.

According to Hu et al., (2005) it is best to spend resources on the most efficient technologies. Small organizations need to seek innovative ways of making their Web sites more user-centred to best serve the purpose of their marketing program (Hu et al.). Johnson Tew et al. (1999) stated that public agencies are typically bound by funds generated from the public and are therefore accountable to the public on how resources are distributed. In their study, Evaluating the Web Presence of Canadian Voluntary Sector Organizations, Cukier and Middleton (2003) concluded that large, well funded organizations were more likely to have the expertise and resources needed to effectively use Web sites than many small voluntary organizations. This could easily be the case for organizations in the public sector as well, more specifically, those organizations offering recreation and leisure opportunities. It could be expected that large, well-established recreation and leisure service organizations are better at planning, designing and maintaining their Web sites.

Similarly, when examining Web -based marketing strategies of visitor bureaus in the United States, Wang and Fesenmaier (2006) identified the organization characteristics, such as size and innovativeness, as important factors affecting marketing success. They also stated that the organizational technology climate such as, the management support and the Internet literacy of the organization, contributed to success.

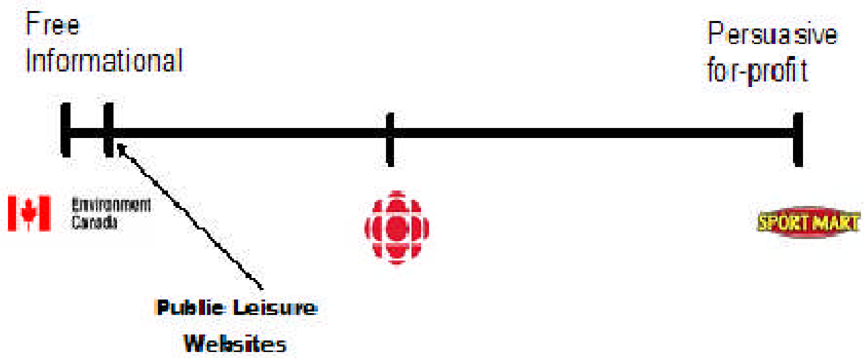
2.7 Diversity of Web Sites

As stated previously, the size of the organization is a key factor affecting how Internet use is conducted. “Large programs can apply sophisticated Web features because of their advantages associated with size, such as superior financial resources, more technological expertise, and meticulous management strategies” (Hu et al., 2005, p. 519). Financial resources are particularly important because constructing and maintaining effective functioning Web sites remains costly. Constantly ensuring up-to-date information and making needed modifications requires resources to do so. Most companies, however, partake in sales and e-commerce, which helps cut down significant costs, helping to establish the Internet as the world's least expensive and most efficient marketing tool. E-commerce is the act of buying or selling via a Web site or an online auction center process supported by electronic means, primarily the Internet (Web trends, 2007). PLSA Web sites, on the other hand, do not generally conduct e-commerce, and may require outside sources of knowledge and expertise to develop and maintain the site.

Internet marketing is the marketing side of e-commerce. Most of the research surrounding Web sites and online communication is strictly regarding e-commerce sites, which are privately operated and used primarily for shopping and banking. It may be difficult to see how PLSA Web site activity could be considered Internet marketing. For the most part, these sites are strictly informational. The idea of selling seems too harsh and only a few sites offer opportunities to purchase or register for services on line. Yet, educating and providing information is essential for communication and, therefore, the term Internet marketing can be used to describe the Web activity of the Web sites examined here.

Gantz (1997) envisioned the diversity of Web sites as continuum. Figure 3 has been included to help illustrate this idea. On one end of the continuum are sites which provide information and services for free (e.g., Environment Canada's sites [http://www.msc-smc.ec.gc.ca/contents_e.html] which provide information on meteorological issues in Canada and allows users to find out about weather conditions for free). At the other end of the continuum are sites which strictly use persuasive techniques to lure consumers to purchase through their Web site (e.g., Sportmart [www.sportmart.com] a site devoted to being Canada's biggest online sports store). Sites such as Sportmart have a clear intent for profit. A number of sites fall between the two extremes, those that provide free information but also have persuasive advertisements (e.g., [www.cbc.ca] Canada's information Web site for news). These sites offer a large amount of free information and tend to be subtler in their for-profit intent. Currently, based on research (Johnson Tew et al., 1999; Jackson, 1999), it would be fair to anticipate that most PLSA sites are at the “non-persuasive, free information” end of the continuum.

Figure 3. Continuum of Web Sites



2.8 Evaluating the Web Sites

Evaluations of Web sites are necessary and significant for a number of reasons: cost for set up, maintenance, quality assurance and making needed updates. The Internet "provides new opportunities and challenges for researchers desiring to evaluate the effectiveness of Web sites, compared to traditional media" (Tierney, 2000, p.212). Measurement is an ongoing issue for online activity. Communicating online is very different from traditional media. "Measuring online performance lacks the sort of sophisticated metrics used by traditional media" (Martin, 2007, p. 23), and, as such, online space lacks a universal recognized metrics measurement.

Like any other communication channel designed to promote, Web sites should articulate what the organization wants the receiver to know, believe, and do. Nevertheless, when the Internet first became a major channel for delivering information, expectations were not met. Users were often unhappy and unsatisfied after leaving the Web site. The viability of Web channels was at stake with outcomes such as, no response to emails, inability to complete transactions, or desired information could not be accessed (Parasuraman et al., 2005). Financial outcomes for private corporations failed to match expectations (Gantz, 1997). This forced Internet marketers to upgrade and frequently modify their Web sites and messages. It soon became clear that there was a lack of research in service quality delivery through the Internet, calling for a need to apply traditional service quality research. If the wrong information is up on the site, or if it is not perfectly placed and linked, the user can become quickly overwhelmed. It is far too easy to move off a site, all that it takes is one click of a mouse.

Many researchers have attempted to assess online benefits and evaluate the various dimensions of Web site marketing. Nearly ten years ago, however, a distinct lack of online marketing research became obvious (Janal, 1998). The lack of research was problematic in creating benchmarks for successful Web sites. This resulted in a deficiency of measurable statistics that marketers could use to justify their online activities (Martin, 2007). It also created difficulties assessing other aspects of communicating online, such as Web site quality, design and navigation ability. Research has now evolved and a variety of measurable tools have been developed for a variety of different Web sites. However, given the complexity of the Internet and the various existing Web sites no one universal method has been agreed upon (Fassnacht & Koese, 2006).

2.8.1 Measuring Web Quality

As current research continues to evolve, multichannel service quality is becoming a major focus (Neslin et al., 2006; Sousa & Voss, 2006). Only a limited number of scholarly articles exist concerning the Internet and service quality. Identifying important research gaps both conceptually and methodology, Fassnacht & Koese (2006) stated that "marketing academia has just started to attend to quality measurement in the context of electronic services" (p. 19). Researchers have developed scales to evaluate Web sites. However, it is argued that many scales do not constitute a comprehensive assessment of a site's service quality. Many scales tend to measure satisfaction and not quality. Parasuraman et al. (2005) suggested that assessment of quality includes both interactions with the site and post interactions; encompassing all interaction phases a customer has with a Web site. Stemming from traditional service quality, electronic service quality (e-SQ) was developed as a way to assess online services.

2.8.1.1 Traditional Service Quality

Based on over 20 years of scholarly research it is suggested that service quality stems from the comparison of what customers feel a company should offer, with the actual service performance (Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1982; Lewis & Booms, 1983; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). Basically every interaction and experience that takes place between the customer and the company results in customers creating expectations (McCarville, 2002). The service gap model was created as a way to categorize when service delivery goes wrong. Based on the gap model Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) conducted empirical studies to develop a multi item scale with the ability to measure service quality. Entitled, SERVQUAL, their scale had the ability to quantify customer responses by measuring along five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. This scale is well-renowned and has been used in many service quality studies within the leisure field (Burns, Graefe, & Absher, 200; Crompton, MacKay, & Fesenmaier, 1991; Kouthouris & Alexandris, 2007: Wright, Duray, & Goodale, 1992)

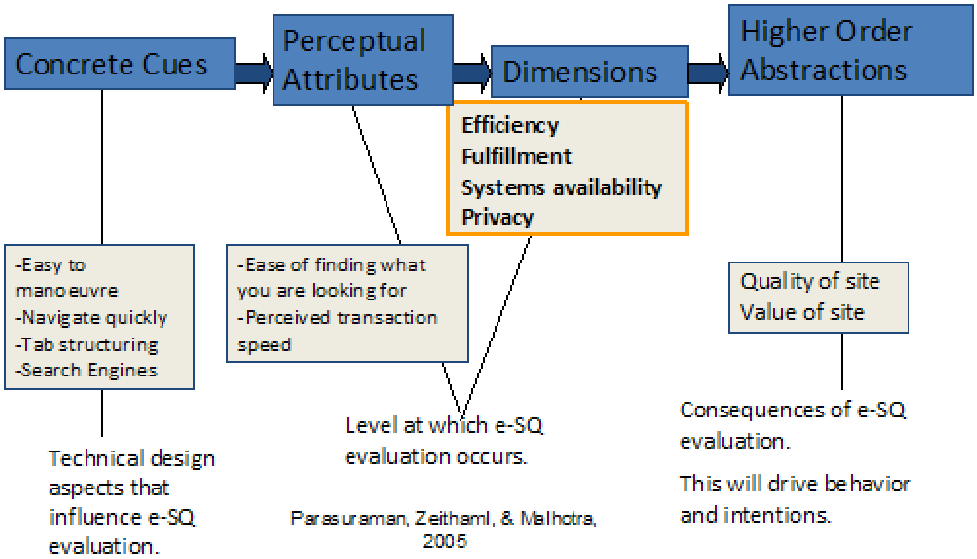
There has long been debate about what is the best way to assess service quality. This debate has become even more prominent with the introduction of the Internet. Traditional service quality literature stems from people-delivered services, and whether this can extend to electronic contexts accurately is still open to evaluation. The similarities and differences between the two have not been entirely resolved (Parasuraman et al., 2005).

2.8.1.2 Electronic Service quality

According to Parasuraman et al. (2005), when developing a scale for assessing electronic service quality there are many considerations taken from the traditional framework: (a) the notion that service quality stems from a comparison between actual service performance and what it should or would be, (b) that the five SERVQUAL dimensions capture the general domains of service quality fairly well and (c) that customers' assessment of service quality is strongly linked to perceived value and behavioural intentions. Based on these considerations, they developed a scale to evaluate the quality of Web sites.

Adopted from SERVQUAL, the new electronic service quality scale (e-S-QUAL) assesses quality on four dimensions: (1) efficiency, the ease and speed of accessing the Web site, (2) fulfillment, the extent to which the Web site's promises are fulfilled, (3) systems availability, the technical functioning of the Web site and (4) privacy, the degrees to which the Web site is safe and protects customer information (see figure 4). The four dimensions have been abstracted from lower attributes and are used because they are easily transferred, easily measured and consistent over time. Therefore, as technology changes, these four dimensions are able to stay the same. In conjunction with these four dimensions Parasuraman et al. (2005) constructed a scale for measuring service recovery (E-RecS-QUAL) which consists of three dimensions: (1) responsiveness, effective handling of problems through the Web site, (2) compensation, the degree to which the Web site compensates for problems and (3) contact, the availability of assistance through the telephone or online representatives.

Figure 4: Electronic Service Quality Model



Defined by Parasuraman et al. (2005), e-SQ is "the extent to which a Web site facilitates efficient and effective shopping, purchasing, and delivery" (p. 217). Based on this definition is it possible that e-SQUAL could be adapted to evaluate non-shopping sites? It was believed that the e-SQUAL model would act as a good starting ground to assess the proposed research questions. However, additional insight was used in conjunction with this framework to ensure an even further accurate assessment of PLSA Web sites. Investigating other dimensions proven to evaluate Web sites aided in developing a coding scale better suited for PLSA Web sites.

A recent study by Fassnacht and Koese (2006) offered a comprehensive review of the existent knowledge on quality of electronic services. In their review they provide reference to the most recent studies and outlined the scope of application as well as the various domains constructed. Table 1 illustrates a few of these major studies involving the evaluation of Web sites. It should be noted that most studies are based around online shopping and all involved other forms of data collection other than content analysis, the chosen method for this study.

Table 1: Review of Studies Related to Quality of Electronic Services

Study	Domain of Measure	Dimensions (Subdimensions)	Scope of Application
Collier and Bienstock (2003)	Service quality	**Process quality** (privacy, design, information accuracy, ease of use, functionality), **Outcome quality** (order timeliness, order accuracy, order condition), **Recovery quality** (interactive fairness, procedural fairness, outcome fairness)	Online shopping
Loiacono, Watson and Goodhue (2002) (Web Qual)	Web site quality	**Usefulness** (informational fit-to-task, interactivity, trust, response time) **Ease of use** (ease of understanding, intuitive operations), **Entertainment** (visual appeal, innovativeness, flow), complementary relationship (consistent image, online completeness, better than alternative channels)	All kinds of Web sites
Parasuraman, Zeithaml (2005) (E-S-Qual)	Service quality	**Efficiency** **Systems availability** **Fulfillment** **Privacy**	Online shopping
Wolfinbarger and Gilly (2003) (eTailQ)	Service quality	**Web site design** **Fulfillment/Reliability Security/Privacy** **Customer service**	Online shopping

Adapted from Fassnacht & Koses (2006)

Studies related to leisure and recreation:

Study	**Domain of Measure**	**Dimensions (Subdimensions)**	**Scope of Application**
Cukier and Middleton (2003)	Web presence	Use of voluntary site, Usability and aesthetics	Canadian Volunteer Web sites
Tierney (2000)	Effectiveness of promotion	Actions taken while on site, reasons for viewing, information desired, and likelihood of visiting California.	California Tourism Web site
Wang and Fesenmaier (2006)	Web based marketing success	**Innovativeness** **Organization size** **Management support** **Internet literacy**	Tourism convention and visiting bureaus Web sites

The last three studies shown in Table 1 are related more so to the public sector and leisure Web sites. Cukier and Middleton (2003) examined the overall Web presence of not-for-profit

Canadian volunteer Web sites. While Tierney's (2000) research goal was to develop and test an Internet- based methodology for measuring the effectiveness of a tourism promotional Web site. Likewise Wang and Fesenmaier (2006) concentrated on tourism to identify success factors of Web-based marketing. They did this by having respondents visit one California tourism Web site and fill out a number of questionnaires.

Chapter 3
Methods

3.1 Outline

This chapter describes the methods used to answer the research questions presented in Chapter One. A standard quantitative format, one that appears in numerous scholarly journals will give guidance for the reminder for the chapter. However, the methods presented here are also very original and innovative in design A discussion of the research design, sample selection, data collection and instrument used for coding, as well as the analysis procedure is provided. Before describing these methods, it is important to restate the purpose and research questions that guided this study.

3.2 Purpose

The purpose of this study was to initiate, using a marketing perspective, a preliminary understanding of the Web presence of Canadian PLSA. With the goal of obtaining data on the evidence of communication efforts in PLAS's Web pages, this study attempted to obtain information on various design, electronic service quality and interaction standards. While maintaining a focus on leisure services, this study also attempted to gain information on The New Public Service, an approach used to understanding the role of government, thus helping to explore the communication connection Web sites generate between local government services and the community.

It is necessary to understand the existing Web presence of PLSA as it will provide a benchmark for future analysis, thus building a foundation for subsequent evaluative research. It will also help facilitate a starting point for any needed improvements and further practical applications. A stratified random sample of ten Canadian municipal Web sites was examined using a quantitative content analysis.

3.2.1 Research Questions

1. What is the current state of online communication efforts for PLSA?
    a) Does the Web presence of PLSA show evidence of a marketing strategy?
    b) Does the Web presence of PLSA show evidence of market segmentation?
    c) Is a coordinated use of the marketing mix elements evident within the Web presence of PLSA?
    d) Does the Web presence of PLSA show evidence of informing, persuading, educating and reminding?
    e) Is a blend of the promotion mix evident within the Web presence of PLSA?
2. Does the Web presence of PLSA show evidence of The New Public Service approach?
3. How well designed is PLSA Web presence in terms of layout, maintenance and integration?
4. How well is the delivery of service quality in terms of efficiency, systems availability, fulfillment, privacy, responsiveness and customization within PLSA Web presence?
5. Does the Web presence of PLSA differ by region with respect to marketing/ communication efforts, new public service concepts, design and electronic service quality?

3.3 Research Design

A good research design is a plan that can be put into action to establish the most accurate data for answering the research questions. Within the area of mass communications, Riffe et al. (2005) stressed the importance of knowing what is needed before the data are collected and analyzed. A good plan helps to smooth out any problems and aids in an effective analysis.

3.3.1 Content Analysis

Quantitative content analysis will be used to analyze the PLSA Web sites. It was the chosen technique as it aids in establishing a foundation for these sites. Consistent with the Centrality Model of Communication, Holist (1969) identified three primary purposes for content analysis: (1) to describe the characteristics of communication (most significant to the current study) (2) to make inferences as to the antecedents of communication and (3) to make inferences to the effects of communication. Content analysis allows for an understanding that communication reflects the process of its production, as well as a cause to particular effects. Riffe et al. (2005) recognized that quantitative content analysis often represents the earliest study in a given area. The reviewed literature suggests that this study will mark the first investigation of PLSA Web presence, virtually requiring a content analysis of this type.

Krippendorff (1980) argued that content analysis is a research technique for making replicated and valid inferences from data to their contexts (p.21). Riffe et al. defined content analysis as “the systematic assignment of communication content to categories according to rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those categories using statistical methods” (p.3). Perhaps more in line with the first stage of this research, Kerlinger (1973) indicated that content analysis is a “method of observation”, similar to observing behaviour in people “except that the investigator asks questions of the communication” (p.525 as cited in Riffe et al. p. 24). Nonetheless, within the field of mass communication, researchers often recognize that content analysis is an essential step in understanding the effects of communication.

3.4 Sample

Population size was a major determining factor in selecting the Web sites for analysis. The Web sites that were used in this study were based on official municipal city Web sites. Municipal data from the 2006 Canadian census was obtained to gain an understanding of the diversity of cities within Canada and to provide rules to which Web sites could be selected. According to the 2006 Census, 80% of Canada's population, about 25 million people, live in urban areas (Statistics Canada, 2006b). To be identified as urban, an area must have a current population of at least 1,000 and a population density of 400 per square kilometre. Using these criteria, the 2006 Canadian census indicated that Canada has 141 urban areas with populations ranging from 8,987 in Kitimat BC to 5,113,149 in Toronto ON (Appendix A). To reduce the broad diversity within this range, and to help create a homogeneous sample, the population for this study was delimited to 33 mid-sized cities in Canada. Mid-sized cities are considered those with populations greater than 49,999 and less than 150,000. These cities are home to approximately nine percent of the Canadian population, or about 2.8 million people, (Appendix B) and were expected to be large enough that they have sophisticated community Web sites containing leisure and recreation information. Mid- size city Web sites were expected to include several specific pages devoted entirely to leisure programs, as well as employ a Web specialist who develops and maintains the site. Leisure specific content was thought to appear on pages identified within the realm of Leisure, Recreation and Parks or Community Services.

For reliability purposes, Riffe et al. (2005), advocate random selection of content samples. Random sampling helps to relieve any biases in the selection process. Furthermore, stratified random sampling allows for an appropriate reflection of the characteristics of the overall population. An interest in regional analysis added to the external validity of the study, therefore, a stratified random sample of ten cities from eastern, central and western Canada was drawn from the population of 33 eligible mid-size cities. The eligible population contained five municipalities from eastern Canada (PEI and NS), 18 cities from central Canada (QC and ON) and ten from the west (AB and BC). There were no cities listed from NF, NB, MB or SK as they did not meet the population criteria.

A random numbers table was used for the stratified random selection process, resulting in the ten chosen Web sites representing the selected cities (n = 10). To ensure each city had an equal chance of being selected all cities were assigned a number (1 - 33) based alphabetically. The city Web sites chosen include: Cape Breton NS, Charlottetown PEI, Brantford ON, Chatham-Kent ON, Cornwall ON, Drummondville, QC, Sault Ste. Marie ON, Chilliwack BC, Lethbridge AB and Prince George, BC (see Appendix C). This resulted in a sample that was fairly proportionate to the original population of 33 cities and allowed for representation from various regions in Canada.

Once the sample was selected the URL address for all ten Web sites was collected by searching the official municipal Web site of each city. For example, to find the municipal Web site for the city of Brantford ON, the Researcher went to www. brantford.ca. Once on the correct site a brief navigation of the site was carried out to ensure that it had some form of recreation and leisure services. As noted above, some leisure services can fall under a variety of departments, some may be called Community Services and others Recreation and Parks (Appendix C). This was taken into consideration when searching for the Web content. As expected, all ten Web sites contained a significant amount of content devoted to leisure and recreation.

3.5 Data Collection

Flexibility of the data collection was seen as an asset to this study. The nature of content analysis and Web sites permitted the research process to be adaptable. It was anticipated that as the data collection transpired, modifications would be made along the way. Flexibility played a significant part in the initial stages of the data collection. Adjusting to what each Web site had to offer resulted in stronger consistency in the content units.

For the purposes of this study, it has been decided that the *home page* is the very first page of the site, a *Web site* is the whole site (including all direct links) and *Web page* (or simply *page*) is any page of the Web site not containing the home page.

3.5.1 Content Units

Reductionism helps to reduce communication content to manageable data. The leisure content of each Web site needed to be divided into smaller elements, called content units, and then analyzed to draw conclusions about the Web presence of PLSA. Reductionism is the view that understanding comes through reducing a phenomenon to smaller, more basics individual parts (Vogt, 1999).

General leisure opportunities offered by PLSA helped to provide an initial distinction for the reduction of content. Russell and Hultsman's (1988), leisure typology was used to rationalize the selection of specific leisure programs and services. Using multidimensional scaling they concluded that there are nine dimensions to leisure programming: arts, crafts, dance, drama, mental, music, outdoor/environmental, social and sports/games. Relationship marketing and concepts from The New Public Service were also considered as criteria for choosing content units. It was decided that most of the programs and services selected for analysis should have a service aspect. This implies that there is a staff and user interaction occurring in the delivery of the service. Consideration of these concepts and the previously mentioned typology has lead to the selection of five program and service content units: an aquatic program, a sport and/or game (e.g., hockey, soccer), a trail or walkway, an art class (e.g., painting, pottery) and a dance or fitness class. An aquatic program was chosen due to both the strong client and staff relationship that is needed for many aquatic programs to be successful, as well as the high requirement for facilities. Sport and game was chosen as it is expected that most cities will offer at least some form of sports program. Not all nine leisure programming dimensions were used because some of the areas were seen as two-fold. All the five areas could potentially have a social aspect, an art class will account for the craft dimension and dance or fitness will capture elements of the drama and music dimension. A walking trail is an important element to the outdoors and the environment and was included to capture, along with the other four elements, the mental dimension of leisure programming.

These original content units were used because program and service offerings seemed to be common ground for all leisure agencies. There was some anticipation that programs and services may vary from Web site to Web site. What was not entirely anticipated however, was the high volume of pages that each of the five content units encompassed. It was also discovered that content pertaining to public leisure could be found throughout the whole municipal site not just on program specific pages. Despite the large amount of pages devoted to the five areas, these content units did not result in a good representation of PLSA Web communication. The amount of pages relating to each activity, in most cases, was found to be unmanageable. For example, opening up an aquatics page, without any purposeful direction can lead to numerous navigational patterns. One could search through a variety of options ranging from, swim lessons to free family swims, indoor or outdoor facilities, infant to senior swim times, swim competitions, or even life guarding certification. Furthermore, in terms of how the agencies are developing their Web content, programs and services are not communicated consistently. For example, some agencies only provided links to partnering organizations who offer programs and services (i.e., local minor baseball organization).

Others simply do not mention (or do not offer) art classes or fitness classes. It was soon recognized that a different approach to reducing content was needed.

Leisure can be found anywhere, under any categories of these sites despite the fact that they are official municipality sites. A high concentration for this study was the leisure presence of these sites but, because leisure opportunities are scattered throughout, it was decided it would be best to start the analysis from the home page of the official site as opposed to the starting page of the Recreation and Leisure Department. This was decided during the collection process and allowed for greater opportunity to access all possible leisure services, as well as provide better insight to community involvement and accessibility, as these are often found throughout the whole site as well.

3.5.1.1 Content Questions

As a way to eliminate content and to help with consistency in the navigation of pages a number of questions were asked of the content. Ten questions were composed (see below), each of which were asked to each Web site. The ten questions provided the direction that was needed when navigating each Web site. Upon finding a solution or closest conclusion in some cases, for each question, a trail was recorded of all the pages that were opened and used to find a solution. These trails, which were termed *Web trails,* provided the pages that were later analyzed and coded. This resulted in 100 content units being coded (10 Web sites X 10 Questions). Posing specific scenario questions proved to be a good means for the reduction of content.

Scenarios were carefully constructed, in the form of questions, to include not only the dimensions of leisure, relationship marketing and The New Public Service concepts, but to address the various persons to whom the Web sites could be directed. In other words, the scenarios attempted to address the various languages chosen to identify the user groups by focusing the questions around different groups. The ten following questions helped set limits to the collection of content from each site:

1. How can a parent register and obtain information on an aquatics program for their preschooler?
2. How can a parent find out how many ice times their teenager will have in a hockey program?
3. How can an existing participant find out who will be instructing a fitness class?
4. How can a local citizen contact the agency concerning a safety issue?
5. How can a local citizen obtain information on a long-term planning issue?
6. How can a citizen find out about the volunteering requirements for leisure programs?
7. How can a cyclist find local trails that allow bikes?
8. How can a senior-aged person find out what they need to bring to an art class?
9. How can an out of town visitor find out about any special events?
10. How can a local citizen find out about accessibility or financial aid programs?

Measures were taken to ensure the appropriate amount of data was collected from each site. To determine if all the content questions were reasonable and suited for the ten sites, the collection of all 100 Web trails was the first step in the collection process. It was necessary to conclude that all ten questions applied to each site. After this process, some of the questions were altered, to what is presented here. Question five originally asked, “How can a local citizen obtain information on a leisure and recreation planning issue?” Many of the Web sites had an enormous amount of planning information however, when it came to being leisure specific the information was quite limited. Therefore, the question was changed so general planning issues could be explored. Yet, to some extent the majority of plans that were chosen did have a leisure and recreation connection whether it was explicitly stated or not. Question nine had a similar change, it first asked about leisure special events. This meant that not only leisure and recreation pages were being opened but pages from different departments or areas of the Web site. Exploring other areas of the site only helped to generate more of a comprehensive picture of PLSA Web presence.

The questions were quite practical and worked well for collecting content. All the questions were chosen specifically to help inform some of the coding items. For example, question two (How can a parent find out how many ice times their teenager will have in a hockey program?) helped to look at partnerships with other organizations, in this case, youth hockey associations.

These ten questions were not meant to be explicitly answered; they were used as a means to select content units (Web pages) upon which the analysis could be carried out. All the pages that were used to come to a solution, and/or closest conclusion, regarding each scenario were analyzed. Upon arriving at a solution to the scenario questions, all Web pages that were opened were recorded, printed and documented into a Web trail. In short, ten questions were posed to each Web site and were coded based on a summary of the trail produced. The ten trails combined for each individual site make up the PLSA Web presence for this study.

3.5.2 Instrument

The coding instrument consisted of three major sections: Content, Design and Electronic Service Quality. Each section included a number of items related to separate categories. In total, 186 items were used in the coding instrument. Where possible, all items that were collected were based on a five point Likert scale in an effort to produce interval level data. This added to the analysis as more information could be derived from higher levels of measurement. Interval data also allowed for the use of parametric statistics (e.g., factor analysis, t-test, ANOVA etc.) more so than can accrue from non- parametric data resulting from categorical (e.g., yes, no) responses. Over 95 percent of the items were assessed on a five point scale. Those items that did not lend well to a five point scale were assessed dichotomously by answering Yes or No (See Appendix D for full instrument). Although content analysis is primarily concerned with manifest content, there is still a need for the researcher to explicate theoretical concepts (Riffe et al., 2005). The following provides a brief explanation of the categories used in the coding sheet.

3.5.2.1 Content

The content section of the coding sheet related to the marketing and communication research questions. Because this study took a marketing perspective, the items loosely followed the steps of the marketing process. A number of the statements, those that fit with this research, were based from Crompton and Lamb's 1986 Government and Social Service Agency Marketing Audit which produces a comprehensive profile of an agency's total marketing efforts.

The items here, as mentioned above, were measured with a five point Likert scale assessing the level of evidence. The five levels were: No Evidence Provided, Very Little Evidence Implied, Some Evidence Implied, Evidence Strongly Implied and Explicit Evidence. The level of evidence was concluded based on a summary of pages consisting of each Web trail. Excluding those items asking for evidence of a specific word or of a mission statement, most answers where determined based on as assessment of content pertaining to the item and the number of pages making up the Web trail. For example, if contact information was given on the home page but not throughout the rest of a five page Web trail, the level of evidence would be low. When deciding on an appropriate score for each item, notes where taken to explain why an answer was given and then where referenced throughout the whole analysis to ensure consistent coding. Appendix E is provided to show a small proportion of notes pertaining to two items (best viewed in coloured print). Essentially the items followed a conventional marketing process consisting of five categories below.

Marketing Strategy. This category refers to the orientation of marketing efforts around a particular philosophy: selling, pure, tempered, or social. Items were divided into three sub-categories to help better understand which philosophy is more evident: (1) Marketing Philosophy, (2) Goals and (3) Language used to Identify Groups. Within these three sub-categories 38 items were used and included: “Is there evidence that benefits are particular to specific clientele”, “Is there evidence that the agency has an interest to the long term impact it has on society/community”, Is there evidence of a mission statement”, “Is there evidence that the agency is aware of their external competition", and "Is there evidence that the agency is referring to client" (Appendix D).

Market Segmentation. Once strategies are in place, potential client groups are divided up based on the marketing practice of segmentation. Segmentation aims to divide potential clients or users into distinct target markets using a variety of socio-demographic (age, income), geographic (size of town, area of city), behavioural (participation patterns) or psychographic (lifestyle, benefits sought) characteristics (Kotler et al., 2005). Segmentations are often identified as being either, undifferentiated, concentrated or differentiated. Nine items were used in this category and include: "Is there evidence that service groups are generic to the entire population", "Is there evidence that target groups are described using more than one variable", and "Is there evidence of segmentation based on behavioural characteristics".

Marketing Mix. This category refers to the utilization of Product, Place, Price and Promotion. Carefully planned applications of these elements are often required for the provision of public leisure service. Along with the four Ps, the three additional Ps were also considered. Fifty-one items (Appendix D) were arranged around the separate Ps and include items such as: "Is there evidence that the service has a name", "Is there evidence that locations are based around clients' convenience", "Is there evidence of cost based pricing", and "Is there evidence of generic information based promotion".

Within the category of marketing mix a sub-category, *The New Public Service,* was included after Place to supplement the distribution of services and touch on more specific issues regarding local governments' relationships with citizens. Nine items were used and included: "Is there evidence that citizens are actively engaged in development and implementation of services", "Is there evidence that interaction is occurring between agency and citizen", and "Is there evidence of citizen contribution".

Communication Objectives. As discussed in the previous chapter promotion is, in large, an exercise in communication and is often defined as having four objectives. In this category 24 items (Appendix D) were constructed to determine if communication was informing, educating, persuading, or reminding. Items included: "Is there evidence of simple messages", "Is there evidence of potential benefits stated", and "Is there evidence that messages gain attention". Like the previous category, items here were also organized around the separate objectives.

Promotion Mix. This category attempted to identify which methods of promotion were evident in the online communication for PLSA. The promotion mix methods include advertising, public service announcements, personal communication and incentives to effectively communicate. Seven items (Appendix D) were used in this category and included: "Is there evidence of personal selling", "Is there evidence of advertising", "Is there evidence of public service announcements", and "Is there evidence of staff having incentives to encourage new users".

3.5.2.2 Design

A number of items within the design section were constructed from Cukier and Middleton's (2003) study, as well as Wolfinbarger and Gilly's (2003) research of online retail (etail) quality. Both of these studies helped to identify important categories to focus on when considering design. All together 17 items were used (Appendix D). Similar to the first section, these items were measured with a five point scale, however, responses were based on quality rather than level of evidence. Possible scores were: Very Poor, Poor, Adequate, Good and Excellent. The design section was developed through organizing items around three categories.

Layout . The layout is the organization and use of features on the site. The layout of a Web site is often the most visual way users can evaluate a Web site. It also provides an early indication for the type of Web site one can expect. The layout of a Web site should be an important consideration for all online marketers. Twelve Layout items (Appendix D) were used and included: “There is use of innovative features” and “The layout is clear”.

Maintenance . This category contained three items and referred to the up-keep of information to ensure updates are being made. Items included: “Are programs current and up-to-date” and “Evidence of updating in the last 24 hours” (Appendix D).

Integration. This category refers to the consistency and coordination of information and design elements. Integration can help create further credibility of a Web site as well as familiarity for users. Items here included: “Style and tone fit the agency”, and “All the pages look the same” (Appendix D).

3.5.2.3 Electronic Service Quality

Derived from the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985), e-SQ was selected to be the primary framework for this section because the SERVQUAL typology has been a dominant recreation and leisure typology for two decades (Crompton, et al., 1991; Wright, et al., 1992; Burns, et al., 2003; Kouthouris & Alexandris, 2007). Although e-SQ is rooted in e-commerce, it was the chosen framework here due to the abstract nature of the individual dimensions. Items pertaining more specially to non-e-commerce Web sites are easily implemented under these dimensions.

Only one category was created for measuring service recovery as opposed to the three offered by Parasuraman et al. (2005) in their E-RecS-QUAL scale. Responsiveness was chosen as it relates to PLSA more than the other two dimensions, Compensation and Contact, which are both somewhat taken into account in many of the items in the Content section of the coding sheet.

Efficiency. Efficiency should help to ensure that the site is simple to use and requires little input from the user. This category contained 11 items and referred to the ease of accessing the site. Items here included: “Navigation is easy” and “Graphics are sophisticated and clear” (Appendix D).

Systems availability. This category consisted of three items and referred to the technical functioning of the site. Items included: “Pages do not freeze” and “The Web pages always work correctly” (Appendix D).

Fulfillment. This category refers to the extent to which the site's promises are fulfilled. Items included: “It is trustworthy” and “It makes accurate promises about service offerings” (Appendix D).

Privacy. This category consisted of five items and referred to the degrees to which the site is safe and protects customer information. Items included: “It protects information about personal Web behaviour” and “Transactions appear to be safe” (Appendix D).

Responsiveness. This category attempted to determine the quality of support, offered to users of the site, regarding problems, concerns or suggestions. Four items were used and included: “The Web pages provide user support” and “It appears to take care of problems promptly” (Appendix D).

Customization. The last category in the E-SQ section was developed by the principal investigator because of the strong emphasis on customization and interactivity in the online marketing literature. It was added in congruence to the E-SQ section as it is believed to further complement these dimensions. This category refers to how request-able information is and how easy the information can be tailored to individual users. An interactive Web site will let the user pick and choose which information they want to view and when they want to view it. Online information should always be at the request of the users. Six items were used and included: “The Web pages have features that can be personalized”, “It is able to give personalized attention”, and “It does a good job at making suggestions” (Appendix D).

3.5.3 Content Forms and Meaning

Within this content analysis, both latent and manifest meaning was derived from the content. Like most quantitative content analysis, however, an emphasis on the manifest meaning of communication was prominent, especially in the coding stage. Analysis of latent meaning often comes at the interpretative stage (Riffe et al., 2005). Two types of content forms, and the combination of these content forms, helped to further frame the analysis. Written communication and visual communication are two basics forms of content and can be found across every Web site in the sample. Written content informs solely with text, whereas visual communication involves non-text symbols such as photographs, films and video. Visual communication can either help add dimension to the text or cloud the manifest content of written communication (Riffe et al., 2005). Shared meaning of visual images is less common than in the case of written text. If there is inconsistency between the written forms and visual communication, the meaning of the content can become ambiguous. Noise or any use of sound was also taken into consideration as a form of transmitting communication. It was found however, that for the majority of these sites, the use of sound was rather limited and did not play a significant role in the communication efforts.

3.5.4 Reliability Checks

Two reliability checks were carried out in order to ensure an accurate level of agreement between the two coders. Neuendorf (2002) noted, "given that a goal of content analysis is to identify and record relatively objective (or at least inter-subjective) characteristics of messages, reliability is paramount" (p. 141). The first check occurred prior to collecting the data, while the second check took place mid-way through data collection, incorporating a translation process. These checks were performed to assess the number of similar responses between the two coders regarding the items used in the coding instrument.

At the onset of data collection, the Principal Researcher and a second coder reviewed the first 138 items, pertaining to the Content section of the instrument. These items involved slightly more subjective interpretation than the items pertaining to Design and e-SQ. Therefore, these items required more attention to reliability than the Design and E-SQ items, however, manifest content was of key interest. The initial check was conducted on one Web trail, consisting of five Web pages. The Web trail used was from the first content question from the city of Brantford. Each independent coder evaluated the same content comparing responses along the way. A minimal agreement level of 80% is typically the standard according to Rife et al. (2005). It was determined that well over an 80% agreement level within responses was evident. The additional coder was familiar with the study and had previous knowledge of the content. Of the scores given to the 138 items most where found to be agreed upon. Those scores that did indicate a discrepancy between the two coders showed very little variance. Typically only one point differences were noted between varying scores.

Similarly, the second reliability check also confirmed an agreement level of over 80% between the two coders. The second check included an additional coder who was a graduate student in the Recreation and Leisure Studies program, at the University Of Waterloo and whose primarily language is French Canadian. Being French Canadian was extremely important for the second check as this also acted as the translation for the Drummondville

QB Web site. The translation began with an information session delivered by the Principal Researcher to the translator/coder. This was done to ensure clarification of the concepts and study methods.

The Translator assisted in the collection of ten content units (Web trails) from the Drummondville Web site. After gathering the appropriate Web pages, the additional coder translated each Web trail, consisting of 1 to 8 Web pages, while the Researcher made English notes on the printed version of each individual page. The Researcher and the coder proceeded to answer the items in the coding instrument for all 186 items, using both the online Web site and the printed pages. It was determined that the individual coders came to very similar responses, following two Web trails; reliability indicated over an 80% agreement level. The researcher continued to collect data on the other eight Drummondville trails solely. However, if clarification was needed on any of the French text the translator was called upon throughout the rest of the Drummondville Web trails.

Through assuring reliability, a proper assessment of the instrument items helped to make the rest of the coding more efficient. The reliability checks also confirmed that some items were not going to be accurately assessed and thus, were eventually dropped from the analysis.

3.6 Analysis Procedures

Due to the online nature of the sample, the research plan was quite feasible. Often a concern with traditional communication media, accessibility to content was seen as an asset for this study. Online material was very obtainable and access to Web sites was unlimited.

Another major strength of this study design was the flexibility of the data collection and the low cost of obtaining data. The data collection took just under three months to complete, which was slightly longer than expected. This was due to the initial data collection protocol being changed shortly after the analysis began. It was originally predicted that data collection would take less than two months to complete.

All Web sites were accessed though the computers in the graduate student lab in Burt Matthew Hall on the University of Waterloo campus, where all computers were well maintained and operated effectively. During the collection phases of the research the number of pages produced from the ten content questions were counted and analyzed. Differences between the content questions were also assessed based on whether or not the explicit solution was accessible.

The data gathered by the content analysis was analyzed in SPSS which allowed for the interpretation of various statistical techniques as well as the creation of new variables. Descriptive procedures in SPSS produced means and standard deviations for variables which also provided minimum and maximum values. Factor analyses were completed for each of the sub-categories comprising the instrument. This reduced the number of inferential statistics to a manageable and comprehensible level. Keeping with traditional significant testing common in social science research, significance was assessed at the .05 level. One-way ANOVAs were used to assess the significance difference where more than two group means were being compared on a single independent variable. Using one-way ANOVA avoids the inflated error of multiple pairwise comparisons (t-tests) by simultaneously accomplishing all mean comparisons with a single significant test. The one-way ANOVA procedure was used to test the hypothesis that the means score for the four different regions were equal.

3.6.1 Research Process Journal

Some items in the coding sheet that did not appear to be congruent with the Web sites were modified. A research process journal was kept to reflect on the various stages of the research and to make sure that all changes and modifications where noted. The process journal helped track the development of the data collection stages and identified any features a site had that were different or unique. The journal also was used to take note of what sections of the coding instrument were working and what items needed to be changed. This helped create a better suited coding instrument, as well as ensured consistency across the data collection process. Unlike survey questionnaires, this research design allowed for the Researcher to go back to previously printed Web pages if or when the instrument had been modified and collect the appropriate data.

Upon visiting each Web site, the Researcher recorded the date, time, and URL of the site, as well as conducted a preliminary search for relevant units of content. Once all units had been identified the data collection took place. For each unit of content the same coding instrument was used. Regardless of the amount of Web pages, each content unit (i.e., Web trail) was generally assessed overall. To help with organization, the format of the process journal was laid out in a grid like fashion (Appendix E).

Chapter 4
Results

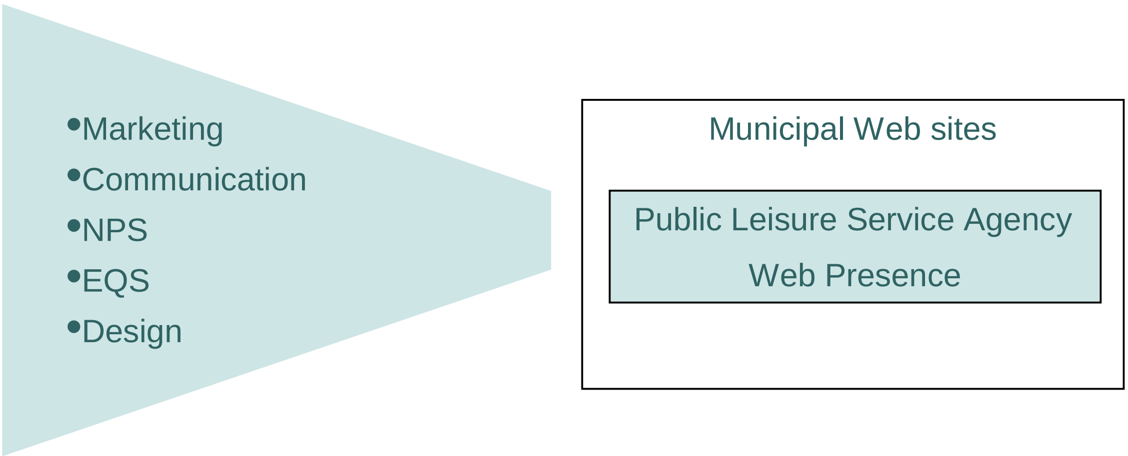
4.1 Outline

The following chapter provides a proportion of the results from the analysis. Within this chapter descriptive statistics resulting from the data are provided along with factorial analyses results, which were used to reduce items to a manageable amount. Research question results are discussed in the Chapter Five. First however, results from the collection stage of the analysis are discussed.

4.2 General Collection Results

A stratified random sample of ten Canadian wide municipal Web sites were drawn from a sample frame of 33 mid-size cities to examine the Web presence of PLSA. Once the sample was selected, no changes were made to the sample itself. However, as outlined in the previous chapter, the original data collection protocol was modified to better suit the purpose of the study. After the modifications were made to the collection procedures, content was analyzed based on 100 Web trails. Each Web trail was created by purposefully navigating the Web sites by posing ten specific questions regarding PLSA. In other words, and as depicted in Figure 5, this study sought to understand the Web presence of PLSA through the lens of marketing, communication, The New Public Service, Web site design and electronic service quality. The ten selected municipal Web sites served as the means to pull this all together.

Figure 5. Web Presence of PLSA



Ten content questions were asked to each municipal Web site in hopes to extract the above concepts. Although these were somewhat general questions they were developed around a foundation of rationale present in the previous Methods chapter. Some concepts were present in more then one question and as a result were more evident than others. As well, some questions were better suited for individual Web sites. These types of observations will provide information on how to structure content questions of this type in the future. Overall 63 of the 100 (10 x 10) content questions where satisfactorily answered, meaning a solution was evident. In some cases, answers were very clear and in others only partial answers where obtained. As shown in Table 2, an extract from the Researcher's Process journal, content questions which reported the highest number of explicit answers were from questions one, four, five, and nine. Questions two, three, six, seven, eight and ten where not as easy to find explicit solutions for. These content questions were often asking for more specific reasons why one might be navigating the Web site. In other words, they often required more information pertaining to educating the users about their interested program. For example, the frequency of participation required by the participant (Question 2), the staff who will be delivering the programs (Question 3), the requirements necessary to participate (Questions 6), special descriptions for locations (Question 7) and what a participant may want to bring with them (Question 9), were all found to be more difficult to find within the Web sites. Those content questions pertaining to more basic information orientated content resulted in more explicit answers, such as basic registration, contact, general planning and special events information. However, for those content questions that were not explicitly answered, enough information was always found leading up to the best solution. The Web sites with the highest percentages of explicit answers were from Drummondville (80 %), Sault Ste. Marie (70 %) and Chilliwack (70 %). Although content questions were not entirely intended to be explicitly answered, inability to answer content question is further discussed as the first data collection issue in the following section.

The number of Web pages for each trail varied between Web site and by question. Table 2 also provides a summary of the number of Web pages used for each city and for each question. In total, 387 Web pages were examined for this content analysis. It should be noted that 18 of these pages were PDFs and 20 Web pages were from partnering organizations. A partnering organization page is one that was opened because a direct link was present on the municipal site. These pages were only used in a Web trail if they helped to answer the content question.

A number of the Web pages, within the 387, were duplicates (149), meaning that many of the same pages where used for different trails. This finding suggested that perhaps most basic leisure information is found only on a few pages of the whole Web site. Appendix F provides a detailed depiction of the specific pages used to form each Web trail. In total 238 different Web pages were used.

Table 2. Summary of Web Pages

	1.Cape Breton NS	2.Charlottetown PEI	3.Drummondville QC	4.Cornwell ON	5.Brantford ON	6.Chatham-Kent ON	7.Sault Ste. Marie ON	8.Lethbridge AB	9.Chilliwack BC	10.Prince George BC	Total
1. How can a parent register and obtain information on an aquatics program for their preschooler?	6 pages 1 is a PDF Found solution *How to register was clear and there was a downloadable form. No-online registration. *Did not have a leisure guide online.	5 pages 2 are PDFs Found solution *Could jump pages b/c of the scroll down options at the top of the page. *Had to go into the leisure guide PDF. Used table of contents and aquatics pages *No hyperlinks in PDF *Had online registration but not for aquatics.	5 pages Found Solution *Aquatics was found in a very strange place under Cultural center. (There were pools under leisure but the lessons were in cultural center). *They have FAQ *No online registrations.	5 pages Found Solution *Could get information on pre-school swim but had to go back to the aquatics program to get to registration information. Bit of a loop. There was a form to download.	5 pages 1 is a PDF Found solution *PDF was slow to open but did not have to access the whole leisure guide. Can choose specific programs instead of having to open the whole guide. Did not see an online registration option	5 pages Found solution *Online registration available. An option to go into the leisure guide but did not. *Could view online registration. while other pages were still up, it opened up a new browser.	5 pages 1 is a PDF Found Solution *There was information on swimming but not on much on how to register, only when to register.	6 pages 1 is a PDF Found solution *How to register was a PDF. No online registration option.	6 pages Found solution *Had a tech issue-schedule would not print right. *Organized around facilities. Had some options, went with the one without a PDF. Really poor tech on this one	3 pages No real solution *Found aquatics information but could not get into the online registration page.	55
2. How can a parent find out how many ice times their teenager will have in a hockey program?	4pages No solution *Did not get very far-could not be found, no link off site. *Used facility information on arenas.	4 pages 2 are partner org. Found solution *Used a link to the Minor hockey association page and opened a schedule page.	8 pages 4 are partner org. Found solution *Found hockey assoc. under Olympique thing.	2 pages No solution *No information on ice times, only contact information. There was no link available to the hockey site. The top sign post made you go into a scroll down option.	6 pages No solution * Used information on arenas and hockey. Not the right type of schedule available- No information on the youth ice times or a link to assoc.	5 pages 2 are partner Found solution *Had link to Minor hockey association. Schedule was available but it was made around facilities.	6 pages 3 are partner Found solution *Had a direct link to a hockey Assoc.	5 pages No solution *May have found more in the leisure guide but it was not opening right. *Just used the Shinny Hockey information and schedule not the minor hockey assoc.	4 pages No solution *Had a link to Minor Hockey Assoc. but would not open.	6 pages 3 are partners Found Solution *Had an external link option for hockey assoc. *The hockey Assoc, had a cool flashy tech thing.	50

3. How can an existing participant find out who will be instructing a fitness class?	5 pages Found solution *A weekly events page had information on fitness programs and instructor's name.	3 pages No solution *Went to the exercise link off the Parks and Rec. page but it pops up as fitness. *No information on staff but lots on fitness programs.	4 pages Some Solution *Had to use an aquatics class as a fitness class. Not focused on sport and Rec so much. More arts and theatre for their leisure. They had some names which were given under hours of classes.	3 pages No real solution *Had a tech problem with a page not opening. Had to call aquatics fitness, no other fitness class was found. No information on instructors.	6 pages 2 are PDFs No solution *Many different ways to get to the same place. Had options for which pages could be used. *Had to go into PDFs but still no information on instructors. DL took awhile.	4 pages No solution *Not very much information on instructors but found stuff on fitness. *Lots of ways to get from page to page. Used a *RecConnected* page for more program information.	6 pages 3 are partner No solution *Had to go into a YMCA site to get information on fitness. *Still no information on instructors.	6 pages 3 are PDFs No real solution *Had to go into leisure guide but only used pages that were informative. *Used a running club as a fitness program.	5 pages 3 are partner No solution *Through an external partner (*Leisure and Rec group* which offers programs for surrounding areas) found information about fitness class schedule.	6 pages 3 are PDFs No solution *Had to use a leisure guide. Had to open the whole thing.	48
4. How can a local citizen contact the agency concerning a safety issue?	2 pages *Contact Us information was used *This question seems to be addressing what the main contact page will contain.	2 pages *Contact Us information was used again. There were no emails offered on this page.	2 pages *An email page right off the home page.	3 pages *Along with city directory and services they had contact a member of council, which is cool.	2 pages * Contact Us page	3 pages *Contact Us button was small. *Did not just give emails you had to click on the name and were sent to an inbox. *Got to choose your directory from a list. And there was a map	3 pages *Contact Us was used. *can contact member of council and the Webmaster.	3 pages *Used a Contact Us, and they had a feedback form for suggestions.	2 Pages *Used Contact Us. Can send emails right online.	2 Pages *Used a Contact Us page, which had a feedback form and a "file a report" option.	24
5. How can a local citizen obtain information on a long-term planning	4 pages *Hard to cut pages down, too much planning issues. Only want to	2 pages *Used a plan that was available right off the homepage regarding parks. Did not go further into the PDF.	2 pages *Used a plan right off homepage. It was a plan to update a community center-centre culture.	2 pages *Used a "Planning Advisory Committee Meeting Notice that	3 pages *Used a downtown revitalization plan.	2 pages *Used a "Notice of Study Commencement" page that was right off the home page.	5 pages *Used a downtown development initiative. *Was easy to find	3 pages * Lots of plans were available. Picked an Area action plan	3 pages *Used a Rec. plan that was found off the leisure page.	5 pages *Just chose which plan seemed clear and went with it. Went	31

issue? (does not have to be Rec. and L. related)	concentrate on Rec and L. *Used a community planning page and then a municipal planning strategy. Did not go into PDF.			was right off the home page.		*Seems to be getting at the concepts this question is seeking.	information on planning.			with a community social plan	
6. How can a citizen find out about the volunteering requirements for leisure programs?	6 pages No solution *Used a volunteer award page (volunteer week) and a contact page.	3 pages Found solution *Could apply right online. Did not really give any requirements though.	2 pages No solution *did not find volunteer stuff anywhere. Only mentioned volunteers on the Drummondville Olympique page thing.	4 pages Found solution *The only volunteer stuff found was through searching it using their home page. It seems like there may be a lot of pages that would be hard to find if you could not search it. Tech problem-one page did not open said it was blank.	4 pages Found solution *Had to look at volunteer opportunities page. Have to contact someone for further information. *Did a search on the Web site for Volunteer stuff, it helped a lot. Did not know where to start.	3 Pages No solid solution *Only solution was to further contact ppl. But there was information on getting involved and types of volunteer jobs.	5 pages No solid solution *Used a program called “Communities in Bloom”. There was not much information on how to register.	6 pages No solid solution *The volunteer pages seem to have a lot to do with community. Used a support for volunteerism page.	3 Pages Found solution *There were many volunteer options but chose the one that appeared first and it was also the one that related to leisure. Could get here from the pull down off the home page.	4 Pages No solution *Did not find how to volunteer just information on volunteer awards.	40
7. How can a cyclist find local trails that allow bikes?	5 pages No solution *No real information on bikes and trails. Used a bike club	4 pages 1 is a PDF map No real solution *Great information on trails. Used PDF map but still not explicit.	2 page Some Solution. They had an important information page - lead to information on paths, used a hyperlink to get to	3 pages No solution *Found information on paths but was not very detailed.	4 pages No real solution *Found trail info but nowhere bikes can go	5 Pages No solution *Found an awesome survey about trail planning, going to use this in	5 pages Found a solution *Did not really talk about trails but they had	4 pages Found a solution *Did not get specific answer but close enough.	2 pages Found solution *Used scroll down right off the home page. *Paged	4 Pages Found Solution *Found some helpful information	38

	program page.		the path section on the page, very long 1 page.		explicitly.	regards to biking even though there was no answer.	some good cycling information.	They had information on park use and trails	mentioned that bikes were used on trails.	about trail use.	
8. How can a senior-aged person find out what they need to bring to an art class?	5 pages No solution *Used the Weekly Events page which contained information on an arts class. *Would have to call someone to find out what to bring. Same trail as q 3.	5 pages 2 are PDFs No solution *Used leisure guide PDF pages. No hyperlinks. *Just contact information for further information.	4 pages No solution Used a gallery page that had information on art classes but nothing specific to seniors or adults.	5 pages No Solution *Nothing specific to seniors but found an adult program. *Included a registration form as it may provide more solutions.	5 pages 1 is a PDF No solution *Went to a senior's center page and then had to go into a leisure guide PDF page but did not say what to bring. *Many ways to get to senior information.	4 pages No solution *Found information on seniors and on arts program in *RecConnect.*	4 pages No solution *There was information on seniors but not on specific art classes.	7 pages 3 are partner *Found information on seniors' art classes but not what to bring specially. *Was not the best technology. *Was taken to another Web site that dealt with seniors.	3 pages No Solution *Used information on seniors groups. No specifics on art classes.	3 pages No solution *Found information on seniors but not on an art class.	45
9. How can an out of town visitor find out about any special events?	2 pages Found solution *Right off the home page there was a special events page.	3 pages Found solution *Kept the visitors page to get to the festivals and events. Could have gone there from home page.	3 pages Found solution *took a link to tourism and then hit calendrier des evenements.	2 pages Found solution *Used an events page right off home page.	2 pages Found solution *Had a calendar of events right on the home page and could click for more information.	2 pages Found Solution *Used a community calendar, which was right off the home page.	3 pages Found a solution *used something called a corporate calendar, it was off the visitors page. But it may not be the best type of calendar for visitors.	2 pages Found solution *Used calendar of events which was right off the home page.	3 pages Found solution *There were some "bad" buttons. *Had search options for events, could look at specific months.	3 pages Found solution *Just used the visitors link right off the home page. There was information on events.	25
10. How can local citizens find out about accessibility	1 page No solution *Could not find any	1 page No solution *Could not find any information for	3 pages Found solution *Going to use "giving grants"	3 pages Some solution *Used a	5 pages Found solution *There was	4 pages Solution *Used a child care subsidy	4 pages Some solution *Used a sporting	6 pages Some solution *Used family and	3 pages 2 are PDF s Some solution *Looks like they are	5 pages 1 is a PDF Found solution *They have	35

or financial aid programs?	information for this in cape Breton. Going to use the home page and the community page.	this in Charlottetown. Going to use the home page	information as a way to help with accessibility.	social service page found in city departments.	information about a subsidy program on child services page.	program.	assistance program for teams competing in provincial, national or international comp.	community services and found a subsidy program.	thinking about subsidy ideas. Found information in strategic plan about access for all.	assistance programs. Used a PDF for more information and how to apply.	
Total	40	32	35	32	42	37	46	48	34	34	387

Question two (How can a parent find out how many ice times their teenager will have in a hockey program?), when asked to the Drummondville site, produced the highest number of pages (eight) to from a Web trail. Question ten, (How can a local citizen find out about accessibility or financial aid programs?), produced the shortest trail consisting of only one Web page, when asked to both Cape Breton and Drummondville. In both these particular cases no information could be found to help answer the question, in which case the only useful Web page was the home page. Despite finding no information concerning the concepts question ten was seeking in two Web sites, it was kept because the other eight Web sites all provided more information. This meant that two Web trails consisted of only the home page.

Due to the exploratory nature of the research design a number of issues arose during the data collection process. Most of the issues revolved around how to choose the pages that would form the Web trails. It would be incorrect to simply state that all those Web pages opened were the ones that formed the trails. In some instances Web pages that were opened became irrelevant to the question at hand and did not contribute to the solution. These types of pages mostly occurred in an effort to find the closest, similar content to a content question when no explicit answer could be found. This led to opening a number of pages to ensure the closest pages were being used. Approximately 70 pages were thought to be irrelevant once opened on the sites. Furthermore those pages irrelevant to the question at hand were not recorded in the Web trails. The following will briefly describe some of the other issues that arose during the collection process.

4.2.1 Collection Issues

Inability to Answer Content Questions

The first issue that needed to be addressed was dealing with no explicit answer to a content question. Ideally navigation for individual questions terminated after enough information was obtained to provide a solution. For example, Question one (How can a parent register and obtain information on an aquatics program for their preschooler?) for Cape Breton was answered when it became clear they did not have online registration but offered a printable, downloadable PDF with special instructions on how and when to register. Yet, for some Web sites answers were not always as clear. Question one for Prince George found no solution when information on aquatics was found but the registration page would not open. In cases such as these where question could not be answered in full, the most appropriate pages leading to a logical solution were used to form the trail; those pages that touched closest on the concepts in the question. Therefore, in the case of question one for Prince George, the pages which contained aquatics and introductory information (Home page, Recreation and Leisure page) created the Web trail.

Pull Down Options

Some trails contained more Web pages than was actually needed to come to a solution. An excerpt from the Researcher's process journal is given to introduce the second issue.

> Pull down options directly effect the amount of pages viewed…It was really hard to count pages from or in the running headings (the elevator buttons). The *pull down options* have pages in them as well. It is easy to lose track of where you

> have been and how to get back to it. Can be led into other areas and programs without knowing it, have to read descriptions carefully (Brantford)…I initially wanted to go to the Recreation dept. page but backed tracked when I noticed a shorter link was available from the home page, aquatics can be found right on city home page. Do not need to go to rec. dept. page (Cornwall).

For this study linear trails were sought, especially for the first few questions. This was done to simply show the Researcher's progression despite the fact that pull down options from the running headings were available and allowed for jumping over pages to get to the desired solution. Despite the ability to skip or jump over pages, caution was taken to go back and open those missed pages. They were added to the trail if it was felt the pages jumped would add to the analysis.

Moreover, it soon became clear that short trails could often indicate a good navigation system; it was easy to navigate with minimal clicks. It was decided that pages could only be jumped if they had appeared in a previous trail or if they contained very little content (less than a sentence and lots of white space). This was common for many of the final questions. It was felt that this was appropriate because any common user would likely use the pull down options containing hyperlinks which would produce non-linear trails.

Printability

Once trails were finalized all the pages were printed out for recording purposes. This ensured that content would stay consistent across the data collection process. Throughout the three month collection process, and particularly during the *Design* section of the instrument, the online Web pages were often referenced. Most of the Web pages stayed the same within the three month period. Now that nearly 10 moths have past, the Web pages were re-visited and were all updated with new information, specially with content on the fall season. The pages were collected during the winter season, one week in the month of January. Many pages had the same pictures as before as well as colour and design layout. A few changes were also noted in tech features of the sites, with new and improved access to online registration.

After pages were printed out they were immediately checked against the online Web page to make sure everything was printed correctly. When differences were found they were indicted on the printed version. However, only minor issues arose with printable content. Only a few small differences were indicated and were due to space and printable margins.

Web Page Length and PDFs

In a few cases, page length became an issue that needed to be addressed. For instance, the Web page titled Renseignemenats Utiles (important information) on the Drummondville site contained reams of information. Hyperlinks were present at the top of the page which would send you, within the same page, to the selected area.

> …sends you to the middle of page when you hit a link at the top of many pages. All the information is on one really long page with hyperlinks, this may not be a bad thing, but it is hard to see were you have been. This was the case for Drummondville. You end up with too much scrolling. Length issue! (Process Journal)

When these types of Web pages were printed off, seven, eight, or nine standard pages of text resulted. Although these long pages are considered one Web page, it was decided to only analyze the content that was visible from the selection of a hypertext link.

A similar issue became noticeable when a Web page led into a program PDF.

> Was lead to a program brochure PDF. No hyperlinks once in the PDF, this poses a problem…lots of info but too much to look at and scroll through. The PDF is meant to be read as hard copy material. When opening a PDF I am only going to code the pages that I actually used and looked at. This is like the lengthy, hypertext Web pages because I am not going to code the whole page but just look at the section that I used to help with the question.

In the case of PDF brochures and lengthy Web pages too much information would have been analyzed that did not reflect the PLSA Web presence for this study. This decision avoided distorting the results by sticking closely to the concepts in the questions as most of the sites contained Web pages with shorter (1-3 pages printed), more specific content.

Once all the collection issues with choosing the Web pages were resolved, data were recorded. A statistical program, SPSS, was used for data analysis. Frequencies were checked to ensure data were coded correctly and was free of errors. Only a few touch ups were needed to clean up the collected data. The data were then analyzed descriptively to check means and normal distributions.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics

The three following tables show means scores for each broadly defined category which appeared in the instrument. Mean scores were calculated by averaging the items in each category. It is important to note that the items used were not created to determine whether an agency does or does not conduct specific operations. The items were, however, created to examine manifest content and assess the level of evidence found on the Web pages. Again, this was done to provide a basis for future investigation.

Recall that categories in the first section of the instrument were assessed on a five point scale where 0=No evidence provided, 1=Very little evidence provided, 2= Some evidence provided, 3=Strong evidence provided, 4=Explicit evidence provided. The Design and E-SQ sections were also assess on a five point scale where 0=Very Poor, 1=Poor, 2=Adequate, 3=Good, 4=Excellent.

Table 3 clearly shows “little evidence” of overt, overall Marketing Strategy, on these sites. There was “very little” to “some evidence” for Marketing Philosophy (m = 1.56, SD = .74) and Goals (m = 1.38, SD = .38). Almost no evidence was present for Language Used to Identify Group (m = .22, SD = .40). This indicates that these Web pages tend to be relatively generic in their wording when addressing an audience. For example words like *members, persons or individuals* were used to describe those in a community. Though not bad descriptors, the mean scores for Marketing Strategy suggest that it is likely that these agencies are product oriented as opposed to a marketing oriented. This is, they may be inclined to focus on an average participant rather than specific individuals or market segments. Yet, overall there is sparse evidence on PLSA Web pages indicating any particular strategic orientation.

Overall scores for the Marketing Segmentation category (m = 1.36, SD = 1.06) also showed “very little evidence” of marketing orientation, indicating that specific target marketing is somewhat unclear from these sites. When looking at the Marketing Mix, similar results are evident. With the expectation of Price, the traditional and extended Ps all fall fairly close between “very little” and “some evidence”. Evidence of the Price component (m = .30, SD = .63) was nearly non-existing. Similarly, any specific identification of the Promotion Mix components (m = .62, SD = 31) were rather weak. The New Public Service sub-category (m = 1.37, SD = .57) was attempting to capture evidence of local governments’ relationships with citizens. This too was found to have very little evidence on PLSA Web pages.

Indicating some evidence and being slightly above average, Informing (m = 2.41, SD = .48) appears to be most evident when looking at the four Communication Objectives. The other objectives scored bellow average and it is quite apparent that the other objectives are not being utilized as much in Web site communication.

These descriptive results present a general overview indicating little evidence of marketing activity on PLSA Web pages.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics from Content Section (n = 100)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max	Range
Marketing Strategy					
Marketing Philosophy	1.56	.74	0	3	3
Goals	1.38	.38	1	2	1
Language Used to Identify Groups	.22	.40	0	2	2
Marketing Segmentation					
Target Markets	1.36	1.06	0	3	3
Marketing Mix					
Product	1.36	.64	0	3	3
Place	.81	.48	0	2	2
The New Public Service	1.37	.57	1	3	2
Price	.30	.63	0	3	3
Promotion	1.24	.41	1	2	1
Promotion mix	.62	.31	0	2	2
People	.93	.80	0	4	4
Physical Evidence	1.27	1.20	0	4	4
Communication Objectives					
Informing	2.41	.48	1	4	3
Education	.86	.57	0	2	2
Persuading	1.44	.78	0	3	3
Reminding	1.36	.64	0	3	3

Based on an index from 0 to 4
0-No evidence provided, 1-Very little evidence provided, 2-Some evidence provided, 3-Strong evidence provided, 4-Explicit evidence provided

Shown in Table 4 the three categories in the Design Section of the instrument collectively show more evidence than the majority of the marketing categories. Elements like colour, background and graphics which make up the Layout category appear to be slightly above average (m = 2.47, SD = .58). Aforementioned seasonal updates notwithstanding, maintenance, was not as evident (m = 1.56, SD = 1.05) indicating that updates to information are perhaps not as frequent as they could be, though the large standard deviation indicates some variability on this factor. The mean score for Integration (m = 3.88, SD = .41) showed a score very close to excellent; suggesting that there is consistency within design elements across the majority of Web pages. Regardless of the maintenance category the overall descriptive statistics for the Design section signified good evidence of design quality.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics from Design Section (n = 100)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Range
Design			
Layout	2.47	.58	1-4
Maintenance	1.56	1.05	0-4
Integration	3.88	.41	2-4

Based on an index from 0 to 4
0-Very Poor, 1-Poor, 2-Adequate, 3-Good, 4-Excellent

Both Efficiency (m = 3.30, SD = .39) and Systems Availability (m = 3.88, SD = .52) are well represented on PLSA Web pages. However, the Fulfillment and Privacy items had to be dropped due to a poor response rate. The Researcher decided it was too difficult to capture evidence for the items under the study's collection methods. In other words, no consistent criteria could be formed to answer the items related to *Fulfillment* and *Privacy*. These four categories could not be measured without completing an actual transaction or having study respondents do likewise.

Table 5 shows that the other two categories which were placed in this section, Responsiveness (m = 1.86, SD = .70) and Customization (m = 1.51, SD = .66), were able to be collected. However, they were found not to be as well represented as Efficiency and

Systems Availability. Mean scores for both the last categories fell between poor and adequate. This suggested that interaction aspects of the Web pages are most likely low.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics from E-SQ Section (n = 100)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max	Range
Electronic Service Quality					
Efficiency	3.30	.39	2	4	2
Systems availability	3.88	.52	1	4	3
Fulfillment					
Privacy					
Responsiveness	1.86	.70	1	3	2
Customization	1.51	.66	1	4	3

Based on an index from 0 to 4
0-Very Poor, 1-Poor, 2-Adequate, 3-Good, 4-Excellent

4.4 Factor Analyses

Considering the number of items used in this study, the above mean scores are more complex than how they appear in Tables 3,4 and 5. Therefore, factor analyses were conducted to check if the individual items did in fact group well together in their respected categories. This technique was not intended to constitute development of a standardize scale but was used to reduce the complexity of all the individual mean scores; to reduce large numbers of variables to a smaller number of factors. This technique allowed the Researcher to assess the separate and combined effects of two or more variables detecting any patterns that occurred. Many items grouped into logical patterns, which related to various sub-themes and were used for further analysis. Items that did not group well together were left outstanding as individual one-factor items.

Variables chosen for each factor analysis were grouped based on the three sections arranged in the coding instrument and will be discussed in the order in which they appear in the instrument. The first category of the instrument concerned marketing strategy and included three sub-categories and contained 38 items.

Marketing Philosophy

The first items of the in the coding instrument examined Marketing Philosophy, a sub-category related to Marketing Strategy. Derived primarily from Crompton and Lamb's (1986) Government and Social Service Agency Marketing Audit, this sub-category originally had 11 variables related to marketing philosophy. One variable, "Is there evidence of client input", was dropped from the two extracted factors due to poor conceptual fit following an initial factor analysis. This item was retained as single item factors as it was deemed conceptually important.

As shown in Table 6 two factors were extracted, using a varimax rotation, for the dimension of marketing philosophy. These two factors were named Client Orientation and Impact on Society. Six items loaded on client orientation and four items loaded on Impact on Society. Together these two factors explained over 67% of the variances in the responses. It is believed that the benefits of reducing data to a manageable size offset the cost of lost meaning within the interpretation. Table 6 also shows both the rotated Eigenvalues for the two new factors, this helps to explain the amount of variance in the original items accounted for by each factor. Traditionally a factor with an Eigenvalue of over 1.0 is considered to be viable. These new factors were saved as new variables and were used for subsequent analysis throughout the reminder of the study.

Table 6. Marketing Philosophy Factor Analysis

Is there evidence…	1. Client orientation	2. Impact on Society	Communalities
that benefits are particular to specific clientele	**.94**	.08	.88
of an obvious group that services are directed towards	**.89**	.09	.81
that the agency knows their client groups	**.88**	.07	.79
that the organization defines itself by the benefits it offers to the client	**.86**	-.00	.74
that the agency is first client focused and second community focused	**.82**	-.10	.69
of clients needs	**.72**	.37	.65
that the agency has an interest in its impact to non-users	.03	**.81**	.65
that the agency has an interest to the long term impact it has on society/community	.06	**.73**	.54
that the agency has an interest to the long term impact it has on the environment	-.11	**.73**	.54
that the agency targets underprivileged people	.25	**.67**	.51
Eigenvalue	4.46	2.33	
% of variance explained	44.63	23.25	
Cumulative variance	44.63	67.93	

Goals

Crompton and Lamb's (1986) marketing audit provided guidance for creation of 20 goal related items. As seen in Table 7, the goal items did not fit conceptually into one factor, in fact, eight factors were evident. However, relationships that were present appeared to be worth noting considering that the data were reduced from 20 items down to eight factors.

Containing six items, the first factor appeared to be the strongest. Although two items involved economic and social environments, the factor was primarily concerned with planning in general. Three items loaded on the second factor and involved developing a current direction. The third factor contained three items as well, which were associated with having a clear focus.

Both the items in the fourth factor were concerned with the external environments while factor five was a single item factor related to communication. Factor six also dealt with communication, containing one item related to online registration and one item related to recognizing feedback. However, these two items were looked at as separate one-factor items in the following chapter because conceptually they provided better information on their own. Two items loaded on the seventh factor as well, related to introducing new aspects of services. The final factor was a single item factor that dealt with program limitation. The eight items that were produced accounted for over 71% of the cumulative variance related to goal setting.

Table 7. Goals Factor Analysis

Is there evidence…	1. Overall Planning	2. Developing Current direction	3. Focused	4. External Environment	5. Communication Person	6. Online Confirmation	7. New Markets and services	8. Program Limitation	Communalities
of long term goals	**.90**	.22	.08	.05	-.05	-.09	-.08	.01	.89
planning	**.88**	.07	.02	-.10	-.05	.12	-.07	.08	.81
of short term goals	**.87**	-.11	.15	.06	.04	-.06	-.10	-.05	.81
that the agency is aware of their external economic environment	**.75**	.30	.06	.22	.15	.17	.02	-.11	.77
of a link to general/strategic plan	**.60**	-.06	-.08	.45	-.40	-.09	.01	-.05	.74

Is there evidence…	1. Overall Planning	2. Developing Current direction	3. Focused	4. External Environment	5. Communication Person	6. Online Confirmation	7. New Markets and services	8. Program Limitation	Communalities
that the agency is aware of their external social environment	**.52**	.33	-.33	-.39	-.10	-.15	.32	-.09	.78
of a mission statement	.12	**.81**	-.04	-.03	-.04	-.11	-.09	-.00	.69
that the agency is aware of their external political environment	.12	**.51**	-.14	.35	.33	-.26	-.08	-.02	.60
that the agency has undergone a needs assessment	.30	**.35**	.12	-.06	-.33	.25	.06	-.20	.45
of resources concentrated to few services	-.20	.18	**-.76**	-.02	-.11	.14	-.09	.00	.68
that the agency is aware of current technology	-.05	.07	**.66**	.03	-.13	.02	.02	-.23	.51
of any objectives stated	.34	.44	**.50**	.10	.02	.02	.10	.28	.65
that the agency is aware of their external competition	.14	.02	.07	**.82**	.15	-.03	.13	-.07	.75
that the agency is aware of their external ecological environment	.12	-.35	-.12	**-.46**	.32	-.41	.20	-.11	.69
of a contact person who deals with communications	-.03	.02	.01	.10	**.87**	.01	.02	.06	.75
of online registration	-.01	-.14	-.13	.03	-.09	**.76**	.27	.13	.72
showing what the agency has done to respond to feedback	.15	-.15	-.04	-.13	.34	**.63**	-.15	-.45	.80
of new services	-.14	-.17	.29	-.05	.20	-.07	**.69**	.13	.67
that non-users can become users	-.06	.03	-.06	.13	-.14	.26	**.77**	-.19	.73
that the agency is getting rid of services that are not working	-.02	-.03	-.15	-.07	.10	.04	-.08	**.88**	.83
Eigenvalue	3.89	1.73	1.58	1.50	1.49	1.47	1.37	1.27	
% of variance explained	19.43	8.64	7.91	7.51	7.45	7.35	6.88	6.35	
Cumulative Variance	19.43	28.07	35.98	43.49	50.94	58.29	65.17	71.52	

Language Used to Identify Users

The last sub-category under marketing strategy was language used to identify participant groups. In this case, no factor analysis was necessarily needed as each item represented an individual title already. Furthermore, due to the nature of the sub-category one of the items ("Is there evidence that the agency is referring to consumers") elicited no positive responses whatsoever. This item was removed from the analysis as it had zero variance and could not compute for all the pairs of variables. Table 8 showed that three factors appeared from the remaining six items. Factor one grouped Residents, Visitors, and Clients together while Customers was the only item in the second factor. The third factor contained both Participants and Citizens. These three factors captured 64% of the variances in the responses.

Table 8. Language Used to Identify Groups Factor Analysis

Is there evidence…	1. Resident/ Visitors/ Clients	2. Customers	3. Participants/ Citizens	Communalitie
that the agency is referring to residents	**.80**	.30	.06	.74
that the agency is referring to visitors	**.80**	-.06	.24	.70
that the agency is referring to clients	**.65**	-.13	-.21	.48
that the agency is referring to customers	.02	**.95**	.02	.90
that the agency is referring to participants	.05	-.18	**.80**	.68
that the agency is referring to citizens	.00	-.18	**-.56**	.35
Eigenvalue	1.71	1.07	1.07	
% of variance explained	28.42	17.84	17.79	
Cumulative variance	28.42	46.25	64.04	

Target Markets

The *Marketing Segmentation* items were also adopted from Crompton and Lamb's (1986) Government and Social Service Agency Marketing Audit. For this stage in the marketing process the audit questions were easier to structure for the purposes of a content analysis. As hoped and shown in Table 9 these nine items loaded around one factor representing 66% of the variance (Table 9).

Table 9. Segmentation Factor Analysis

Is there evidence…	Single factor	Communalities
of segmentation based on sociodemographics	**.93**	.86
how many variables are used to describe market groups	**.91**	.82
that market groups have been chosen	**.89**	.79
of segmentation based on behavioural characteristics	**.87**	.76
that two or more market segments have been chosen	**.87**	.76
of specific benefits for each segment	**.85**	.73
of segmentation based on geographic restrictions	**.68**	.46
that services are generic to the entire population	**.64**	.41
that the agency serves population groups that may not be served by other agencies	**.60**	.36
Eigenvalue	5.96	
% of variance explained	66.19	
Cumulative variance	66.19	

Product

Continuing with the marketing process, the *Marketing Mix* items were arranged according to the four Ps and each group was expected to each produce one distinct factor. However the eleven items comprising the Product component loaded on three factors and explained nearly 60% of the cumulative variance. This was initially surprising, yet conceptually had meaning as the first factor, Communicating Service Name allowed for recognition of the importance of a product name, or in this case, services, programs and events.

Factor two represented four traditional service quality dimensions developed in Parasuraman et al's. (1988) SERVQUAL scale. This factor allowed for a cumulative investigation of service quality aspects. A major dimension to the SERVQUAL scale is tangibility, characterized primarily by physical evidence. Items related to physical evidence loaded on a third factor. Not only is this factor an extension of the service quality dimensions but it also represents one of the extended Ps as discussed by Parasuraman et al's. As such, the lone item intentionally designed for physical evidence ("Is there evidence that the agency considers physical evidence as a component of their services") was placed into a second factor analysis and as expected, shown in Table 10, the additional item relating to physical evidence also loaded around the third factor. Therefore, this new factor will be used when discussing both the Product and Physical Evidence components of the marketing mix.

Table 10. Product Factor Analysis Revised

Is there evidence…	1. Communicates Service Name	2. Service Quality Aspects	3. Physical Evidence	Communalities
that the service have a name that is easy to pronounce and remember	**.93**	.09	.14	.88
that the service has a name	**.91**	.21	.06	.88
that the name communicates the benefits of the service	**.83**	.21	.16	.76
that new upcoming services are communicated	**.54**	-.08	-.01	.30
of empathy	.16	**.77**	.06	.62
of reliability	.01	**.75**	.16	.60

Is there evidence…	1. Communicates Service Name	2. Service Quality Aspects	3. Physical Evidence	Communalities
that the service have a name that is easy to pronounce and remember	**.93**	.09	.14	.88
that the service has a name	**.91**	.21	.06	.88
that the name communicates the benefits of the service	**.83**	.21	.16	.76
of assurance	.11	**.74**	.10	.57
of expert personnel	.25	**.50**	-.07	.32
of responsiveness	-.14	**.48**	-.16	.28
that the agency considers physical evidence as a component of their services	.10	.06	**.88**	.79
of the physical appearance of the facilities	.11	-.05	**.85**	.73
of picture or visual tours of the facilities	.03	.04	**.67**	.45
Eigenvalue	2.81	2.30	2.06	
% of variance explained	23.40	19.18	17.16	
Cumulative variance	23.40	42.58	59.74	

Place

Fourteen items where used for the factorial analysis conducted for Place. Table 11 shows that five factors were extracted. Both the first and second factors contained four items. The first factor was primarily concerned with evidence of an equity model being used. The second factor involved items connected with who was responsible for allocation of services and programs and if partnerships were present.

Three items loaded around the third factor and dealt with the availability of services while the fourth factor represented the importance of a service location. The fifth factor included two items associated with the physical accessibility to facilities and amenities. Together these five factors accounted for 62% of the cumulative variance for the responses.

Table 11. Place Factor Analysis

Is there evidence…	1. Equity Model	2. Partners	3. Availability	4. Location Importance	5. Accessibility	Communalites
equal opportunity model	**.85**	-.11	.13	.14	-.05	.77
of which equity model they use	**-.83**	.12	.16	.04	-.14	.76
market model	**.81**	.04	-.26	-.17	.16	.77
compensatory model	**.70**	-.08	.04	.16	-.35	.65
of a facilitative approach	.02	**.87**	.06	.26	-.15	.84
of partnerships with other agencies or organizations in the private not-for-profit sector	-.10	**.66**	.07	.41	-.24	.67
that the agency is the direct provider of the service	-.12	**.63**	-.12	-.23	.10	.49
of partnerships with other agencies or organizations in the commercial sector	.12	**.62**	.20	-.07	.08	.45
of partnerships with other agencies or organizations in the public sector	-.21	**.49**	.02	-.06	-.16	.32
that scheduling is based around clients' convenience	-.03	.03	**.88**	.07	.09	.79
of multiple service offerings	-.30	.16	**.76**	.17	-.10	.73
that the service goes to the client (outreach)	-.28	-.18	**-.30**	.12	-.20	.25
that locations are based around clients' convenience	.13	-.06	.41	**.46**	.20	.44
of directions	.13	-.03	.19	**.62**	-.03	.43
of safety concerns	-.16	.07	-.10	**.74**	.17	.61
that there is parking for cars and bicycles	.03	-.09	-.16	.33	**.78**	.75
of physical disabilities access to facilities	-.02	-.14	.30	-.04	**.69**	.59
Eigenvalue	2.88	2.33	1.94	1.67	1.50	
% of variance explained	16.92	13.73	11.43	9.82	8.80	
Cumulative variance	16.92	30.64	42.08	5.89	60.69	

New Public Service

Due to the distributive nature of the Place element, items referring to The New Public Service concepts were examined next. For this area, nine items were used for the analysis. Table 12 shows that three factors where extracted and resulted in 65% of cumulative variance. The first factor contained five items associated with Citizen Involvement. Two items loaded on a second factor and was titled Opportunity. Two items also loaded on a third factor which related to administrative control.

Table 12. New Public Service Factor Analysis

Is there evidence….	1. Citizen Involvement	2. Opportunity	3. Administrative control	Communali
that citizens are activity engaged in development and implementation of services (empowerment)	**.90**	.08	.08	.82
of citizen contribution	**.88**	.08	.10	.79
that interaction is occurring between agency and citizen	**.85**	.11	.00	.73
that citizens have control over services	**.72**	.00	-.07	.52
that citizen are encouraged to be involved in the development and implementation of services	**.66**	.21	-.07	.48
of accessibility being a priority	.04	**.76**	-.09	.58
that interest centers on the enhancement of the community	.24	**.73**	.14	.61
that interest centers on the enhancement of the agency	.16	-.21	**.78**	.68
that administrators have control over services	-.18	.31	**.76**	.70
Eigenvalue	3.37	1.31	1.24	
% of variance explained	37.39	14.59	13.74	
Cumulative variance	37.39	51.98	65.72	

Price

As illustrated in Table 13, the Price component of the marketing mix did not load onto one factor either, yet eight items out of ten loaded onto a strong factor titled General Price. Two items, “Is there evidence of online payment offered” and “Is there evidence of a subsidy options” loaded on a second factor titled Online and subsidy options. These two items were separated in further analysis as they are best understood independently. The two factors represented 73% of the variance explained in responses.

Table 13. Price Factor Analysis

Is there evidence…	1 General Price	2 Convenience and Subsidy options	Communalities
of demand based pricing	**.88**	.18	.81
of going–rate pricing	**.86**	.17	.74
that price is offered	**.78**	.47	.83
of cost based pricing	**.84**	.32	.82
that prices are based around target groups willingness to pay	**.77**	.51	.85
that costs are reflective of non-monetary costs as well	**.76**	-.26	.65
that prices are based around target groups abilities to pay	**.69**	.60	. 84
that there are opportunities for interested prospects to sample services at an introductory price	**.52**	.41	.45
of online payment offered	.09	**.86**	.74
of subsidy options	.40	**.77**	.59
Eigenvalue	4.77	2.54	
% of variance explained	47.73	25.40	
Cumulative variance	47.73	73.12	

Promotion

After recoding "Is there evidence of generic information based promotion" (because agreement indicated lack of marketing orientation) three factors were extracted out of the nine items related to promotion. One factors, "Is there evidence that the organization is responsible for Web site communication" was not included in the analysis because there was no variance in the answers for that item, meaning it could not be correlated with the other items. The findings indicated that organizations were universally responsible for their own Web sites and there was no evidence that outside contractors were used. If there was an outside Web site developer, most likely, the public organization still held all responsibility for that Web content.

As shown in Table 14 this resulted in nine items used in the factor analysis. The first factor grouped items involving a direct audience and contained four items. Three items loaded on the second factor all of which associated to the cost of promotional efforts. The third factor contained two items and was titled Additional Information. The three factors represented nearly 65% of the variances in the responses.

Table 14. Promotion Factor Analysis

Is there evidence….	1. Audience	2. Cost Awareness	3. Additional Information	Communalities
that the agency addresses the wants of the specific client group	**.93**	.04	.08	.87
that the message is directed toward the intended client group	**.93**	.05	-.02	.86
of specific communication packages for targeted groups	**.90**	.10	.09	.83
of generic information based promotion	**.54**	.20	-.08	.34
suggesting that promotion expenditure is a cost or an investment	.09	**.81**	.06	.67
of other communication and informational means mentioned on the Web site	.34	**.64**	-.26	.59
that communication resources have been given to certain programs over others	-.04	**.56**	.56	.64
that staff and specific service providers are identified and highlighted	-.11	.06	**.66**	.46
that the agency is over promising	.28	-.25	**.65**	.56
Eigenvalue	3.01	1.50	1.27	
% of variance explained	33.76	16.67	14.15	
Cumulative variance	33.76	50.43	64.57	

Information

Within promotion, as mentioned in previous chapters, lie four Communication Objectives. The Communication Objectives are incorporate next as they help contribute to the overall understanding of promotion and communication activity.

The first Communication Objective examined is informing. Table 15 shows that two factors appeared out of the seven items in the informing objectives items. The first factor contained five items, out of seven, and strongly related to the actual content of the message.

While the second factor centred on the length of the message. When combined these factors represented 55% of the variance.

Table 15. Information Factor Analysis

Is there evidence…	1 Informational Messaging	2 Message Length	Communalities
of clear messages	**.78**	.23	.66
of basic information	**.72**	-.20	.56
of simple messages	**.69**	.48	.72
of any new services announced	**.56**	.01	.33
that more information is about the terms of the programs and services	**.46**	-.29	.29
of short messages	.23	**.83**	.74
of in-depth information	.23	**-.75**	.62
Eigenvalue	2.35	1.59	
% of variance explained	33.60	22.39	
Cumulative variance	33.60	55.99	

Education

The second Communication Objective is Educating. Table 16 illustrates that three factors extracted from the educating items collectively represented nearly 73% of the variance explained. The first factor primarily captured the education concept while the second factor simply contained the lone item, “Is there evidence frequently asked questions”. The third factor contained two items which related to educating by offering information about the people involved in services.

Table 16. Education Factor Analysis

Is there evidence…	1 Evidence of Educating	2 FAQ	3 Educating with People	Communalities
that information provides what to bring	**.86**	-.21	-.04	.78
that messages communicate potential benefits	**.71**	.46	.18	.75
that programs provide description and design	**.61**	.58	.27	.78
of FAQ	-.05	**.90**	-.09	.82
of information on the staff delivering the program	-.10	-.02	**.83**	.70
of information on current users of the program	.24	.03	**.70**	.55
Eigenvalue	1.68	1.40	1.29	
% of variance explained	28.06	23.37	21.55	
Cumulative variance	28.06	51.43	72.99	

Persuading

Table 17 indicates that two factors where evident for Persuading, the next communication objective. Like Educating, the first factor here also strongly represented the primary concept, of persuasion. This factor alone represented 48% of the variance explained. The second factor extracted, Intentional Audience, helped to determine if there was a direct audience to which they attempted to segment. Persuasion effects are best intended for a specific group which allows a greater connection with the receiver to whom message is targeted. Together these factors represented 66.79% of the variance explained.

Table 17. Persuasion factor Analysis

Is there evidence…	1 Evidence of Persuading	2 Intentional Audience	Communalities
of potential benefits stated	**.88**	.32	.87
that information is presented with benefits to the clients	**.86**	.37	.87
of words creating vivid images	**.82**	-.25	.74
that messages gain attention	**.78**	.11	.63
that value is created for the customer in order to have them return	**.77**	.25	.65
of emotion in messages	**.66**	.05	.44
that messages are geared toward non-users	-.04	**.80**	.65
that messages are targeted towards a specific group	.28	**.65**	.50
Eigenvalue	3.90	1.45	
% of variance explained	48.71	18.08	
Cumulative variance	48.71	66.79	

Reminding

The last Communication Objective was reminding. Despite a low factor score for one item all three Remaining items loaded around one factor, representing 51% of the variance explained.

Table 18. Reminding Factor Analysis

Is there evidence…	Single Factor Evidence of Reminding	Communalities
that messages are easy to remember	**.79**	.62
that messages target current clients	**.79**	.63
that the Web site provides information on other media being used	**.54**	.30
Eigenvalue	1.54	
% of variance explained	51.30	
Cumulative variance	51.30	

People

Similarly when examining People, an extended marketing mix element, the items loaded around one factor. In this case only two items were used to capture this element and explained nearly 60% of the variance.

This was the last sub-category of the Marketing Mix to undergo a factor analysis. Although both Physical Evidence and Process are element of the extended marking mix they did not require data reduction. Physical Evidence will be examined when discussing product and process only consisted of one item, which was found to be difficult to collect. Yet, the notion of process, or a sequence of operations, may be more visible when determining the extent of some of the other marketing mix elements.

Table 19. People Factor Analysis

Is there evidence…	Single Factor Evidence of People	Communalities
that the agency considers their staff as a component of their services	**.65**	.56
that the agency considers other customers/ clients/ users as a component of their services	**.65**	.56
Eigenvalue	1.19	
% of variance explained	59.52	
Cumulative variance	59.52	

Promotion Mix

The last category in the Content section took a close look at the evidence of the *Promotion Mix* elements. As shown in table 20, seven items existed in this category and resulted in four factors. The first factor contained advertising and public service announcements, both of which are non-personal forms of communication. The second factor contained two items connected to the utilization on staff members within communication methods. The third factor also contained two items, yet, each was discussed as single items as the factor lacks strong conceptuality. The final factor was a single item factor and contained the lone item related to personal communication. Together these four factors, representing promotional mix elements, had a cumulative variance of 58%.

Table 20. Promotional Mix Factor Analysis

Is there evidence…	1. Non-personal	2. Staff	3. Contact /Incentives	4 Personal Communication	Communalities
of the agency using advertising	**.75**	-.27	-.12	-.16	.68
of public service announcements	-**.76**	-.11	-.03	-.26	.66
of staff having incentives to encourage new users	-.30	**.79**	-.07	-.15	.74
that the agency has matched its staff with the type of people characterized in the target market	.15	**.81**	.12	.20	.74
of systems in place for the agency to respond to consumer inquiries regarding promotion	-.28	-.07	**.82**	.18	.79
that incentives are used	.39	.22	**.66**	-.29	.73
of personal communication	.07	.05	.01	**.92**	.85
Eigenvalue	1.50	1.42	1.15	1.12	
% of variance explained	21.43	20.32	16.46	15.95	
Cumulative variance	21.43	41.75	58.21	74.16	

Layout

The second section of the coding instrument was Design and contained three categories. The Design items were developed from a combination of studies examining Web site design elements. Although none of these studies conducted a content analysis they offered far more adaptable question items than in the Content section and were easier to place within this study.

The first category in the Design section of the coding instrument was Layout and consisted of 12 items. Within this category two factors were extracted. The first factor, as seen in Table 20, focused on technical features that help create the layout content such as colour, background and site map. The second factor primarily concerns the surface placement of content; what one would observe initially once opening the Web page. In this factor, “Limited proofing and spelling” loaded on the second factor and was left there as proper grammar and language can often be an initial visual for many users. Together these factors accumulated nearly 55% of the variance.

Table 21. Layout Factor Analysis

	1 Design/ Layout features	2 Surface Layout	Communalities
There appears to use the best technology	**.84**	.21	.76
There are features that are entertaining to use	**.81**	.05	.66
There is use of innovative features	**.76**	-.20	.62
Is there a site map available	**.71**	.21	.55
The appearance is professional	**.67**	.37	.58
Clear use of colour and background	**.66**	.36	.56
Graphics are sophisticated and clear (short download time and are useful)	**.66**	.09	.44
The use of text and pictures is well balanced	**.56**	.36	.44
The layout is clear	.14	**.73**	.55
Limited use of scrolling (important information and links at the top)	.29	**.68**	.54
Information is well organized	.29	**.65**	.51
Limited proofing and spelling errors	-.31	**.54**	.39
Eigenvalue	4.4	2.24	

	1 Design/ Layout features	2 Surface Layout	Communalities
% of variance explained	36.33	18.65	
Cumulative variance	36.33	54.98	

Maintenance

Three items represented Maintenance, the second category in the *Design* section. Illustrated in Table 22 these items represented 66% of the variance when extracted to one factor.

Table 22. Maintenance Factor Analysis

	Single Factor Maintenance	Communalities
Evidence of updating within the last 3 days	**.95**	.90
Evidence of updating within the last 24 hours	**.89**	.80
Are programs current and up-to-date	**.53**	.29
Eigenvalue	2.0	
% of variance explained	66.00	
Cumulative variance	66.00	

Integration

Similarly, the Integration category had a low number of items and loaded around one factor. Table 23 shows that the two items combined accumulated for almost 73% of the variance.

Table 23. Integration Factor Analysis

	Single Factor Integration	Communalities
All the pages look the same	**.85**	.73
Message consistency, the design elements are all identical	**.85**	.74
Eigenvalue	1.45	
% of variance explained	72.69	
Cumulative variance	72.69	

Efficiency

The third and final section of the coding instrument attempted to examine e-SQ. While e-SQ provided a general guidance for a number of the items in this section, a service quality measure was not meant to be obtained. Like the Content section these items were designed to look at the evidence of various e-SQ aspects. Furthermore, both the Fulfillment and Privacy items were dropped as both of these categories were too difficult to capture in a content analysis. Comparable to what happened here, Riffe and colleagues (2005) caution researchers about using existing measures as the variable being studied might be slightly different from those in existing literature. The two categories dropped included items better suited for a questionnaire survey; one with respondents completing online transactions.

The first category in this section was Efficiency and consisted of 11 items. However, one item, “Completes transactions quickly” was left out of the factorial analysis. This item was not properly collected as no transactions transpired for the analysis to take place. This produced a factorial analysis consisting of ten items which loaded on three separate factors. Represented in Table 24, the first factor included four items associated with the speed of navigation while the second factor consisted of five items and was associated with the ease of navigation; the ability to move through a site without any problems. The third factor was a single item factor which related to the availability of relevant links off the site. These three factors represented 68% of the variance explained for the Efficiency items.

Table 24. Efficiency Factor Analysis

	1. Speed	2. Ease of Uses	3. Links	Communalities
Pages load fast	**.92**	-.12	.08	.87
It enables quickly	**.91**	-.06	.03	.84
All clicks take you somewhere new	**.81**	.02	.14	.68
There are no missing link messages	**.70**	.21	-.18	.56
Different ways to get straight to where you need to go	-.12	**.82**	.01	.69
Makes it easy to get anywhere	-.07	**.84**	-.13	.73
Good signpost menus at all times	-.19	**.55**	-.42	.51
Navigation is easy	.18	**.84**	.03	.73
Can find what you want with a minimum number of clicks	.32	**.49**	.12	.35
The Web site has links to relevant sites	-.01	.02	**.94**	.88
Eigenvalue	3.00	2.69	1.15	
% of variance explained	29.98	26.88	11.49	
Cumulative variance	29.98	56.87	68.35	

Systems Availability

Three items were used to represent the next E-SQ section, *System Availability.* Table 25 shows that the items all loaded on one factor and represented 89% of the cumulative variance for this category.

Table 25. Systems Availability Factor Analysis

	Single Factor Systems Availability	Communalities
Pages launch and run right away	**.97**	.94
The site always works correctly	**.94**	.87
Pages do not freeze	**.93**	.86
Eigenvalue	2.68	
% of variance explained	89.37	
Cumulative variance	89.37	

Responsiveness

The four *Responsiveness* items also loaded around one factor. Indicated in Table 26 this factor held nearly 50% of the cumulative variance. Responsiveness was an original dimension in the e-SQ Recovery Scale but was used as a category in this section of the data collection instrument.

Table 26. Responsiveness Factor Analysis

	Single Factor Responsiveness	Communalities
Opportunity to give feedback	**.85**	.71
It provides contact information of agency members	**.74**	.55
It appears to take care of problems promptly	**.71**	.50
It provides user support	**.47**	.22
Eigenvalue	1.99	
% of variance explained	49.60	
Cumulative variance	49.60	

Customization

Additionally, a Customization category was not a dimension of the e-SQ scale but was added to this section by the Researcher to help get a closer look at interactivity and personalization of the Web sites. Table 27 shows two factors resulted from the six items used to represent customization. Three items associated with personalization made up the first factor. The Second factor contained the other three items which all related to interaction. Together these two factors represented 66% of the variance explained.

Table 27. Customization Factor Analysis

	1. Personalization	2. Interaction	Communalities
It is able to give personal attention	**.94**	-.05	.87
It has features that can be personalized	**.92**	.07	.84
It is able to store preferences and offer extra services or information based on preferences	**.84**	.14	.72
There are feedback mechanisms	.23	**-.46**	.27
It understands specific needs	.20	**.76**	.62
It does a good job of making suggestions	.15	**.79**	.64
Eigenvalue	2.54	1.44	
% of variance explained	42.36	23.95	
Cumulative variance	42.36	66.30	

Chapter 5
Research Question Results

5.1 Outline

The next chapter of the results will present, and briefly describe the results of the research questions. Most of the variables shown in the following tables reflect the new factors created by the factorial analyses. Along with the new variables, the tables also contain some of the single factor items (the original items) and are appropriately indicated. The majority of the research questions were answered by simply interpreting descriptive results. Research question five involved an analysis of variance which allowed for a comparison of mean scores.

Throughout this study equal variance was assumed between the five levels (0-No evidence provided, 1-Very little evidence provided, 2-Some evidence provided, 3-Strong evidence provided, 4-Explicit evidence provided) used for the Content section scale, as well as for the Design and E-SQ sections (0-Very Poor, 1-Poor, 2-Adequate, 3-Good, 4-Excellent).

5.2 RQ 1. What is the current state of online communication efforts for PLSA?

To help answer the first research question, Table 28 depicts those variables that are related to marketing communication efforts. It is clear from Table 28 that the evidence for marketing strategy, segmentation, mix, promotion mix, and communication objectives was below average. The norm among the Web pages was "very little evidence provided". There where several cases where “some evidence” was apparent and no cases where “strong” or “explicit evidence” was provided.

Scores were based on a summary of Web pages used to form a trail. With the exception of items simply determining existence of a word (e.g., client, resident, and visitor) or a mission statement, the majority of item score reflected an overall summary of any one trail. For example, evidence for market segmentation may be strong on one page but not on the four other pages in the same trail, consequently lowering the item score.

Table 28. Mean Scores for Communication Efforts (n = 100)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max	Range
Marketing Strategy					
Marketing Philosophy					
Factor 1: Client orientation	1.46	1.16	0	4	4
Factor 2: Impact on society	1.78	.88	0	4	4
Item: of client input	1.61	.86	0	4	4
Goals					
Factor 1: Overall planning	1.62	1.01	0	4	4
Factor 2: Developing current direction	.50	.67	0	3	3
Factor 3: Focused	2.10	.36	1	3	2
Factor 4: External environment	1.26	.59	0	3	3
Item: Communication person	1.34	1.46	0	4	4
Item: Online registration	.40	1.64	0	4	4
Item: Responding to feedback	.23	.65	0	3	3
Factor 7:New markets and services	.70	.73	0	3	3
Item: Program limitation	.07	.33	0	2	2
Language Used to Identify Groups					
Item 1: clients	.08	.56	0	4	4
Item 2: consumers	.00	.00	0	0	0
Item 3: customers	.04	.40	0	4	4
Item 4: citizens	.24	.95	0	4	4
Item 5: participants	.06	.45	0	4	4
Item 6: residents	.84	1.64	0	4	4
Item 7: visitors	.28	1.03	0	4	4

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max	Range
Marketing Segmentation					
Single factor	1.16	1.25	0	3	3
Marketing Mix					
Product		1.25	0	4	4
Factor 1: Communicates service name	1.50	.59	0	3	3
Factor 2: Services quality aspects	1.47	.92	0	3	3
Factor 3: Physical evidence	.97				
Place					
Factor 1: Equity model	.74	.14	0	1	1
Factor 2: Cooperation/partners	.93	.86	0	3	3
Factor 3: Availability	.98	.84	0	3	3
Factor 4: Location importance	.97	.86	0	3	3
Factor 5: Accessibility	.26	.64	0	4	4
Price					
Factor 1: General price	.29	.69	0	3	3
Item: Online Payment	.43	1.17	0	4	4
Item: Subsidy options	.20	.71	0	4	4
Promotion					
Factor 1:Audience	1.29	.87	0	3	3
Factor 2:Cost Awareness	.77	.37	0	3	3
Factor 3:Additional Information	.53	.54	0	2	2
People					
Single factor	.93	.80	0	4	4
Promotion Mix					
Factor 1:Non-personal	1.11	.43	1	3	2
Factor 2:Staff	.08	.28	0	2	2
Item: Responding to inquires	.88	1.48	0	4	4
Item: Incentives	.20	.79	0	4	4
Item: Personal communication	.89	.97	0	4	4
Communication Objectives					
Informing					
Factor 1: Informational messages	2.58	.59	1	4	3
Factor 2: Length of message	1.98	.47	1	4	3
Educating					
Factor 1: Evidence of educating	1.35	.87	0	3	3
Factor 2: FAQ	.28	1.03	0	4	4
Factor 3: Educating with people	.42	.60	0	2	2
Persuading					
Factor 1: Evidence of persuading	1.37	.86	0	3	3

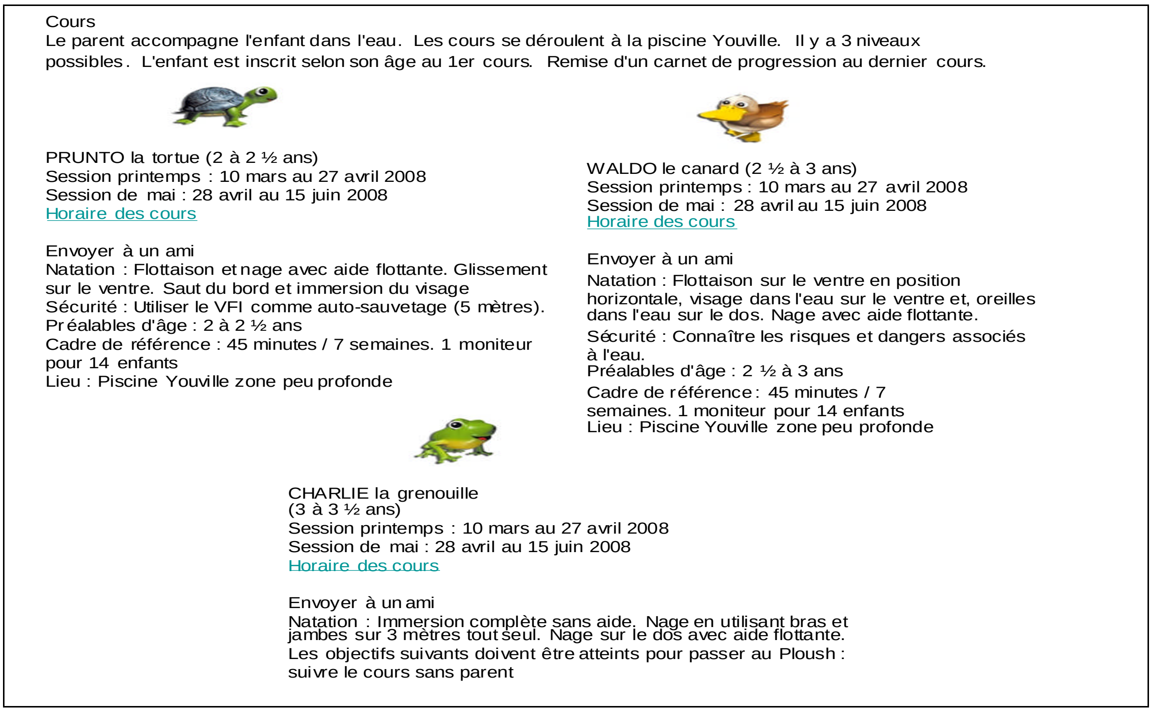
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max	Range
Factor 2: Intentional audience Reminding	1.63	1.03	0	4	4
Factor 1: Evidence of reminding	1.36	.63	0	4	4

Based on an index from 0 to 4
0-No evidence provided, 1-Very little evidence provided, 2-Some evidence provided, 3-Strong evidence provided, 4-Explicit evidence provided

5.2.1 RQ 1 a. Does the Web presence of PLSA show evidence of a marketing strategy?

Marketing Strategy was broken down into three categories, all of which helped to suggest if a specific marketing strategy was evident. The mean scores for Marketing Philosophy all indicated below average levels of evidence. The two variables contributing to Marketing Philosophy both fell between “very little evidence” to “some evidence”. The score for Client Orientation (m = 1.46 SD = 1.16) was slightly less than that for Impact on Society (m = 1.78, SD = .88). Within these two factors a number of criteria were created for each item. The decisive criteria contributing to the mean score for Client Orientation included examining each Web trail for specific user groups (e.g., tots, seniors or new moms). It also included identifying level of services offered, indicating an understanding of users’ needs or any other general evidence of understanding the variety of users. Figure 6 presents an example of “explicit evidence” of client oriented evidence. This example is of the first Web trail from the Drummondville Web site which asked about swim programs for preschoolers. It is clear that they know their participants quite specifically. They have divided up parent and tot swim lessons into three distinct levels, all with descriptive age appropriate information about the class. This example suggests that the agency is very knowledgeable about the skill levels and programs of toddlers needs.

Figure 6. Client Orientation



Cours
Le parent accompagne l'enfant dans l'eau. Les cours se déroulent à la piscine Youville. Il y a 3 niveaux possibles. L'enfant est inscrit selon son âge au 1er cours. Remise d'un carnet de progression au dernier cours.

PRUNTO la tortue (2 à 2 ½ ans)
Session printemps : 10 mars au 27 avril 2008
Session de mai : 28 avril au 15 juin 2008
Horaire des cours

Envoyer à un ami
Natation : Flottaison et nage avec aide flottante. Glissement sur le ventre. Saut du bord et immersion du visage
Sécurité : Utiliser le VFI comme auto-sauvetage (5 mètres).
Préalables d'âge : 2 à 2 ½ ans
Cadre de référence : 45 minutes / 7 semaines. 1 moniteur pour 14 enfants
Lieu : Piscine Youville zone peu profonde

WALDO le canard (2 ½ à 3 ans)
Session printemps : 10 mars au 27 avril 2008
Session de mai : 28 avril au 15 juin 2008
Horaire des cours

Envoyer à un ami
Natation : Flottaison sur le ventre en position horizontale, visage dans l'eau sur le ventre et, oreilles dans l'eau sur le dos. Nage avec aide flottante.
Sécurité : Connaître les risques et dangers associés à l'eau.
Préalables d'âge : 2 ½ à 3 ans
Cadre de référence : 45 minutes / 7 semaines. 1 moniteur pour 14 enfants
Lieu : Piscine Youville zone peu profonde

CHARLIE la grenouille
(3 à 3 ½ ans)
Session printemps : 10 mars au 27 avril 2008
Session de mai : 28 avril au 15 juin 2008
Horaire des cours

Envoyer à un ami
Natation : Immersion complète sans aide. Nage en utilisant bras et jambes sur 3 mètres tout seul. Nage sur le dos avec aide flottante.
Les objectifs suivants doivent être atteints pour passer au Ploush : suivre le cours sans parent

http://www.centre-culturel.qc.ca/fr/piscine/cours/2/categorie.aspx 2/19/ 2008

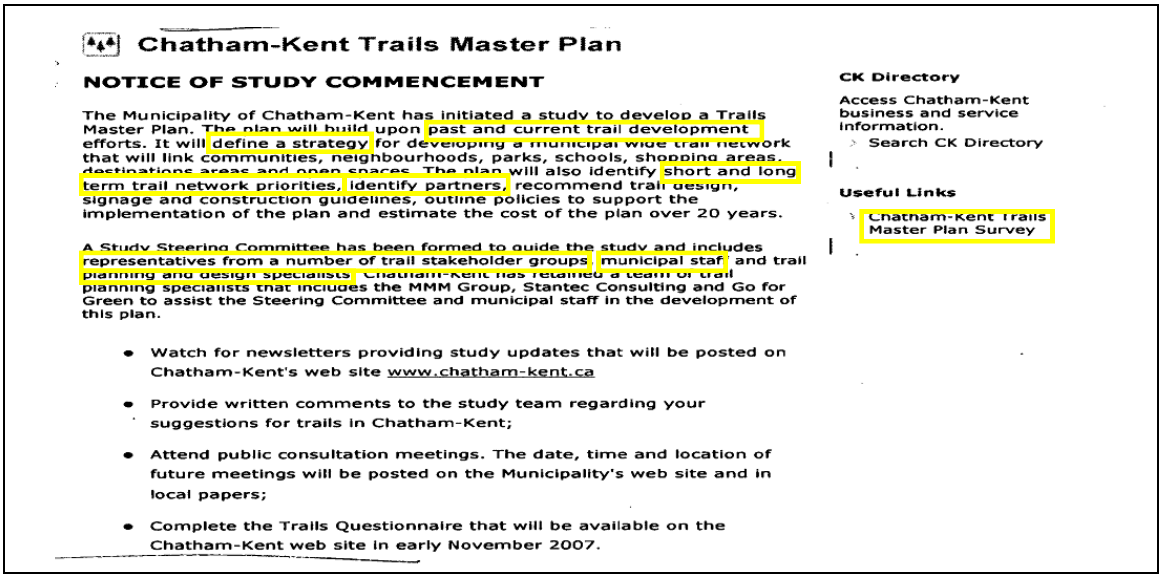
Figure 6 also shows evidence of Impact on Society by including brief information concerning child safety. Other criteria used to measure Impact on Society included subsidy options and accessibility, assistance for youth and environmental acknowledgments.

The single item, Client Input (m = 1.61, SD = .86) had a similar mean score to the other two factors. In this particular case scores were strictly based on whether or not research into participants' needs was obvious. For example, in one Lethbridge Web trail it was clear that the agency sought out client input by stating "when we surveyed Lethbridge citizens…".

This was considered "explicit evidence". Other explicit evidence included options to fill out a survey online or asking for user feedback and comments. Identifying Client Input was uncommon within the majority of the Web trails and was reflected in the overall low mean score.

With the exception of factor 3, Focused, below average scores were also evident from factors representing Goals. Included in Table 28, the majority of the Goal factors indicated "very little evidence provided". A strong example of Goals is provided in Figure 7 which shows a proportion of a Web page from Chatham–Kent. In addition to "explicit evidence" of Overall Planning, there is also a link to a city wide master plan. A number of the decisive criteria for goals are evident in this example: short and long term planning, stated objectives, external and internal awareness, as well as contact information.

Figure 7. Goals



Chatham-Kent Trails Master Plan

NOTICE OF STUDY COMMENCEMENT

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent has initiated a study to develop a Trails Master Plan. The plan will build upon past and current trail development efforts. It will define a strategy for developing a municipal wide trail network that will link communities, neighbourhoods, parks, schools, shopping areas, destinations areas and open spaces. The plan will also identify short and long term trail network priorities, identify partners, recommend trail design, signage and construction guidelines, outline policies to support the implementation of the plan and estimate the cost of the plan over 20 years.

A Study Steering Committee has been formed to guide the study and includes representatives from a number of trail stakeholder groups, municipal staf and trail planning and design specialists. Chatham-Kent has retained a team of trail planning specialists that includes the MMM Group, Stantec Consulting and Go for Green to assist the Steering Committee and municipal staff in the development of this plan.

- Watch for newsletters providing study updates that will be posted on Chatham-Kent's web site www.chatham-kent.ca
- Provide written comments to the study team regarding your suggestions for trails in Chatham-Kent;
- Attend public consultation meetings. The date, time and location of future meetings will be posted on the Municipality's web site and in local papers;
- Complete the Trails Questionnaire that will be available on the Chatham-Kent web site in early November 2007.

CK Directory

Access Chatham-Kent business and service information.

Search CK Directory

Useful Links

Chatham-Kent Trails Master Plan Survey

http://www.chatham-kent.ca/recreation+and+tourism/recreation+and+parks/parks/community+parks/Chatham-Kent+Trails+Master+Plan.htm 1/15/2008

Within the sub-category, Language Used to Identify Users, mean scores were all very low. This means that the words chosen for the items were not used regularly at all in these sites.   Residents, Visitors, and Citizens, however, were found to be the most prominent words within the Web trails, most often identify in a heading. Illustrated in Figure 8, a Brantford Web page offered options for participants in their running headings, two of which were Residents and Visitors. Rarely were these words found in text. Furthermore, when addressing participants, the majority of the sites used words like *people, persons, members, you, individuals* and *even rate-payers* which was found in Chathem-Kent.

Figure 8. Language Used to Identify Users

http://www.brantford.ca/content/publishing.nsf/Content/Home   1/9/2008

5.2.2 RQ 1 b. Does the Web presence of PLSA show evidence of market segmentation?

The evidence of Market Segmentation was also minimal. The single factor had a low mean score (m = 1.16, SD = 1.25) indicating “very little evidence”. Many times variables describing user groups were used but only one variable was used at a time. For instance, stating an age group or a skill level only. Rarely were more than one or two variables used to describe services for potential users. The variables that were of particular interest included geographic, behavioural, sociodemographic and physiological. As presented in Figure 9, Charlottetown showed evidence of strong segmentation when offering fitness classes. In this example we can see that classes are broken down by three criteria: age (adult and senior), by location and, level of fitness impact. As well, a few benefits that may be important to these groups are presented, such as being easy, fun or staying young at heart.

Figure 9. Marketing Segmentation

Fitness Programs
COMMUNITY ADULT FITNESS CLASSES
The Charlottetown Parks and Recreation Department offer classes to fit all fitness levels, including aerobics, step classes, ball classes, strength training, interval classes, and circuit classes. Offered at convenient times in morning and the evening, with babysitting available during morning classes for a small fee. Fun and easy to follow!

ADULT
Stepping Out Fitness Class
Description
This program offers low - medium impact classes to fit all fitness levels including aerobics, step classes, ball classes, strength training, interval classes, and circuit classes.
Location: Park Royal Church Gym

Adult AM Fitness Classes
Description
This program offers low - medium impact classes to fit all fitness levels including aerobics, ball classes, strength training, interval classes, and circuit classes.
Location: West Royalty Community Centre

Circuit Fitness Classes
Description
A great class filled with a variety -a whole body approach. Come and improve your balance, strength, abds, and flexibility, with cardio bursts. High and low impact options given throughout the class. Fun and easy to follow!
Location: West Royalty Community Centre

SENIORS FITNESS
Parkdale Fitness Classes
Description
This program is offered to seniors who are looking for some moderate exercise to maintain physical health while keeping you young at heart.
Location : Park Royal Church Gym

Downtown Fitness Classes
Description
This program is offered to seniors who are looking for some moderate exercise to maintain physical health while keeping you young at heart.
Location: Trinity United Church Gym

http://www.city.charlottetown.pe.ca/residents/exercise_programs.cfm 1/8/2008

5.2.3 RQ 1 c. Is a coordinated use of the marketing mix elements evident within the Web presence of PLSA?

Mean scores for the new factors and single item factors created for the Marketing Mix elements are also included in Table 28. The Marketing Mix elements were all poorly represented. In general, mean scores indicated “very little evidence”, particularly for Price, which surprisingly was rarely evident on the Web pages. It was concluded from most of these means scores that when one element indicates “very little evidence” the others typically will as well. The mix elements are to be used in coordination with each others.

The mix element showing the most evidence was Product. Both factors, Communicates Services Name (m = 1.50, SD, 1.25) and Service Quality Aspects (m = 1.47, SD, .59) were below average relative to the possibilities, but were the two most prominent Marketing Mix factors. In 1993 McCarville and Garrow explored the influence of name section, emphasizing that consumers rely heavily on product names to make assessments. They concluded that names with a focus on service benefits generated the most positive product evaluation and encouraged service provides to consider a well thought-out name as it is often the first communication clue given about a new product or service. Although many of the services and events identified on the Web pages were communicated by name not all names were particularly memorable or communicated any type of benefits. Figure 10 is included to highlight some differences between service names. Chilliwack offered many fitness classes. Some classes were named with benefits in mind while some were not. For example, *Swissball* and *Yoga* are not overly descriptive and may leave more questions than answers about the class. Swissball is likely to be more problematic then yoga however, as the former is not as common in modern language as the latter. Names such as *Sit & Be Fit, Step Level 2, and Senior's Cardio* tell more about the class in question; who it may be geared towards and what participants may be doing. A name like *Girls Just Want to Have Fun* offers specific benefits to a targeted group. This name is quite memorable and has the potential to spark attention to find out more about the class.

Figure 10. Service Name

CHILLIWACK LANDING LEISURE CENTRE — Chilliwack

Fitness Centre Schedule - as of March 26 2007

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sund
6:05am	Jet Step		Power Hour				
9:15am	Jet Step	Step Level 2	Power Hour	Step Level 1	Cardio Blast	Step & Ball	
10:25am	Step & Strength	Swissball	Step Level 1	Swissball	Intro Step Cardio	Yoga	
11:30am			Yoga		Sit & Be Fit		
1:15pm		Sit & Be Fit	Senior's Cardio		Senior's Cardio		
3:30pm		Girls Just Wanna Have Fun					
5:30pm	Step Level 2	Swissball	Step 1	20/20/20 Abs/Butt/Thighs	Belly Dancing		
6:45pm	Swissball	Step Kickboxing	Dance Fusion	Step Kickboxing			
8:00pm	Yoga	Boxing For Men & Women			Line Dancing		

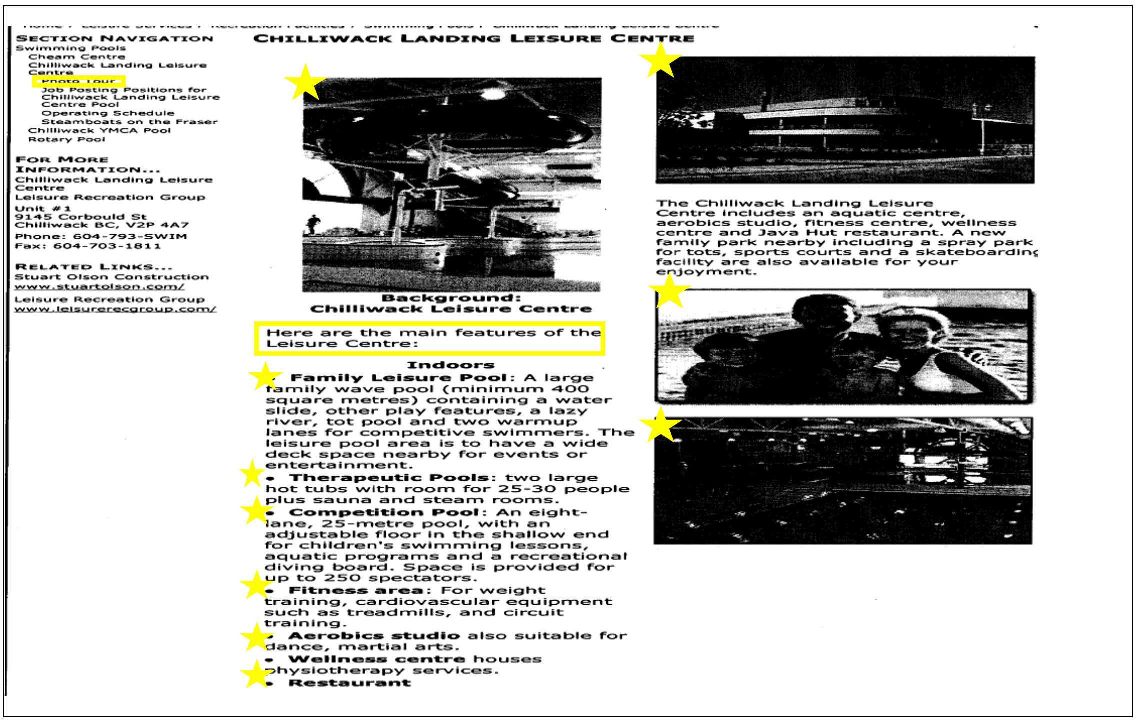
http://www.leisurerecgroup.com/_scripts/schedule.asp?fac=clla&schedule=fitness 1/10/2008

The Service Quality Aspects (m = 1.47, SD = .59) were a bit more difficult to identify. Some of the evidence that was identified included personnel names and backgrounds, service guarantees, refunds, evidence of caring and responsibility. This type of evidence helped to communicate expert personnel, assurance, empathy, reliability, responsiveness within the Web trails. Overall, scores for various Service Quality dimensions where found to be between “some evidence” and “very little evidence” provided.

An additional service quality aspect is tangibility, characterized here as the third Product factor, Physical Evidence. Physical Evidence (m = .97, SD = .92produced the lowest mean score for the Product factors. The evidence that was being considered included, picture and visual tours, description about the facilities and landscape, as well as any main features that may be attractive to potential participants. For example, games, computer, or crafts room, auditoriums and fully stocked kitchens.

Although the use of pictures and Web tours are an easy way to communicate physical evidence for potential participants, surprisingly these features were not used as often as expected. Only two sites had evidence of Web cams. Web sites are an easy way to provide this type of evidence and communication to users yet the majority of pictures were one dimensional and rarely were virtual tours or Web cams available. Figure 11 is provided to show an “explicit evidence” example of physical evidence. Although virtual tours were not offered by Chilliwack when providing information on one of their leisure centers, they did offer a photo tour, consisting of a stream of 12 photos. They also provided four clear coloured pictures right on the Web page and gave detailed description about the facilities.

Figure 11. Physical Evidence



http://www.gov.chilliwack.bc.ca/main/page.cfm?id=46 1/10/2008

The Place element was very difficult to identify within the Web trails. The five new factors that were created from the 14 Place items all resulted in mean scores lower than 1.0 indicating "very little evidence". The first factor, Equity Model (m = .74, SD = .14) contained those items attempting to address which equity model was employed by the agencies. However, these items were found to be hard to determine and as a result a single factor containing the three equity models was created because deciphering between equal opportunity, compensatory and market models was too difficult on Web pages. Criteria included evidence of generic services, those geared towards everybody (equal opportunity model), or if allocation was considered for disadvantaged people (compensatory model), as well as price which provided clues to the type of model employed. Yet, overall evidence of specific equity models was extremely weak.

The Place component also considers the distribution of programs, services and events. The last four factors of the Place element concern how, when and where services will reach the users. The second factor, Cooperation/Partnership (m = .93, SD =.86) indicated "little evidence" of other organizations contributing to services offered by these agencies. Some examples of not-for-profit partnerships were evident with organizations such as: The Red Cross, minor sports and YMCA. Hotels and Restaurants were seen as the primary commercial partnerships while Provincial organizations providing direct funding were found to be the top partnering public organizations. Conventional delivery of public services suggests that some type of partnership is evident in one form or another. However, little was found when searching for evidence of cooperation and partnerships on Web pages.

"Very little evidence" was provided regarding Availability (m = .98, SD .84), Location Importance (m = .97, SD = .86) and Accessibility (m = .26, SD = .64). In these particular cases, evidence was determined based on scheduling and location convenience – the number of multiple services offered, if directions or maps were provided, parking for cars and bikes, wheelchair accessible indications and if safety concerns where highlighted. In general, the Place items were difficult to explicitly identify within the Web pages. The low mean scores for the Place factors may also suggest that the items where not sufficiently specific to convey important information regarding location, access and availability.

Furthermore, and as stated above, evidence of the Price component was also very weak. The factor, General Price (m = .29, SD = .69) showed extremely low results. The majority of the programs and services within the Web trails did not list any explicit prices. Therefore, when attempting to gather evidence for the other items concerning Price, scores resulted in well bellow "very little" to "no evidence" provided. Identifying any specific pricing strategy was also restricted to the lack of prices stated. However, Chilliwack showed evidence of demand based pricing when they provided their prices for swim times, shown in Figure 12. Here, they have attempted to control supply and demand by adjusting Price according to time; during the slowest and the busiest hours. As well, they provided different pricing for different participants, which helps add extra value for users of the service. It is clear that they are not employing a cost base pricing strategy if they are able to provide the same service for a different price to different individual. However, whenever fees are used within these types of agencies, it is more than likely going towards a portion of the total cost for services. This example could also provide some evidence suggesting going rate pricing. Yet, there are no comparative prices given, so it is suspected that these prices are average charges for a drop in swim.

Figure 12. Demand Based Pricing

Admission Rates

	Drop-in	Non-Prime Drop-in M-F 11am-2pm except holidays	Last Chance Drop-in Last hour of buildings operations	Loonie-Toonie Fun Sundays 6:30pm-9:30pm	Swim Le Parer Parents swi same time child's le
Adults (19-64)	$5.25	$4.75	$3.75	$2.00	$2.0
Children (3-12)	$2.75	$2.25	-	$1.00	-
Family*	$12.75	$11.25	$5.25	-	-
Senior (65+)	$4.25	$3.75	-	$1.00	-
Students (with ID)	$3.25	$2.75	-	$1.00	-
Teens (13-18)	$3.25	$2.75	$2.25	$1.00	-

* Family is defined as 2 adults and 4 children (18 and under) or 1 adult and 5 children (18 & under) in the same household.
* Children under 3 always swim FREE!
* Children under 7 years of age must be accompanied at all times by someone at least 14 years of age.
* You need to be 15 years of age to work out in the weight room by yourself or 13 or 14 with an adult.

http://www.leisurerecgroup.com/facilities/chilliwack/index.asp 1/10/2008

The second factor created for Price contained only two items. It was decided to look at thes items as single item factors. Like the previous factor, both items Online Payment (m = .43, SD = 1.17) and Subsidy Options (m = .20, SD = .71), were virtually non-existent. Within the Web trails, only three sites appeared to have an online payment or registration option. Perhaps other areas of the Web sites provided more online payment opportunities but this study concentrated on the leisure presence of the sites and links were not provided by most PLSA. In terms of subsidy options, the type of evidence that was of concern involved sample introductory prices or financial aid for those who may need assistance. It is believed that this type of assistance is offered from PLSA, and perhaps from other partnering organizations, but it was almost never communicated on Web sites examined from this study.

The fourth Marketing Mix element is Promotion and like the previous elements this aspect generated below average scores. Three factors were created from the nine items used to capture evidence for Promotion. The first factor, Audience (m = 1.29, SD = .87) attempted to determine if messages were directed at a specific group. Similar to the factor used to determine evidence of market segments, criteria here included evidence of specific user wants and of bundles of multiple messages put together, directed toward intentional clientele. Primarily this was evident when children and adult services were highlighted. However, like market segmentation this resulted in below average evidence of strong marketing orientations.

The last two Promotion factors provided even weaker results. The factor Cost Awareness (m = .77, SD = .37) resulted in nearly "no evidence" as no strong clues were given on the Web sites which would suggest Promotion was an investment or a cost. The most useful clue was the overall quality and design of the site. If more communication resources were given to certain programs over others it could suggest cost awareness. Yet, it was hard to determine this on a Web site because each page is usually designed around a specific program. Within some sites it was interesting to note the programs that appeared on the events or community calendars. This did in fact provide some evidence showing communication resources. As well, this showed if other promotional means were mentioned in the Web site. The factor, Additional Information (m = .53, SD = .54) had a very low mean score. In this case little criteria were formed to determine if, for instance, the agency was over promising. For the most part the information was never excessive. Other things considered here included additional information on the staff and service providers.

The criteria used to determine the evidence of staff and service providers was primarily captured in the extended Marketing Mix element, People. Evidence of People ($m = .93$, $SD = .80$) continued to be aligned with the other traditional mix elements and resulted in "very little evidence". To earn a score of "explicit evidence", staff not only had to be identified but their backgrounds and qualifications had to be highlighted as well. If existing users of programs were addressed, with some defining characteristics, this added to the People element as well. As presented in Figure 13, volunteers also added strong support for the People element. In this case, a seniors' care home in Cornwall is encouraging potential volunteers while providing information on current and past volunteers- what they did and who they were.

Figure 13. Evidence of People

Volunteers Needed

Volunteers make our Lodge a home
Glen Stor Dun Lodge Residents have always enjoyed the support of the comm unity. Many individuals joyfully share their time, talents, and friends hip to bring a little cheer to our Residents' life. Their laughter warms our home, their songs lift our spirits, and their caring comforts everyone's heart.

These individuals come from all walks of life and in all shapes and sizes. We have welcomed teenagers, young mothers, empty nesters, and retirees. We also have many feathered and furry friends. In addition, service clubs, church organizations and other community groups continue to enliven our halls with a great vari ety of entertainment.

"To the world you may be just one person, but to one person, you may be the world."
-Source Unknown

There is always a place for the willing

At the Glen Stor Dun Lodge, there is a whole host of programs that greatly depen d on volunteer support. They include. recreational events, physical therapy, creative arts, s ocial functions, Tuck shop, Outreach services, and other specialized programs. Please visit our Volunteer Opportunities page for further details.

It is our belief that there is always a place for the willing. As a community- minded organization, we are closely linked to other services requiring volunteer support. If you cannot find the niche within our facility, we are more than willing to redirect your generosity to other agencies.

Beyond satisfaction, what volunteers get in return of their service

Volunteers are motivated by a sense of responsibility and compas sion to others. This giving of self yield a lucrative return of satisfaction and self worth. In addition, many benefit from having the opportunity to:
learn new skills, explore career paths, make new friends

http://www.cornwall.ca/main.cfm?PageName=Glen%20Stor%20Dun%20Lodge%20Volunteers%20Needed.. 1/10/2008

5.2.4 RQ 1 d. Is a blend of the promotion mix evident within the Web presence of PLSA?

Promotional Mix elements were extremely difficult to identify within the Web pages. A Web page alone is a form of promotion, a less traditional form however, of online advertising, publicity and personal communication. The Promotion Mix items attempted to identify more traditional forms of promotion used by an agency: advertisement, public service announcements, personal communication and incentives. Explicit evidence of particular promotional forms was used to determine the means scores. Indicated on Table 28 two factors and three single items were used to represent promotion. Factor one, Non-

Personal (m = 1.11, SD = .43) assed the level of advertising and public service announcements (PSA). It was decided that because the means of communication, for this content analysis, was a Web site, some form of advertising was evident. Any other form of advertising either on or external from the site was difficult to capture. This was so far PSA as well, yet, because this is a public site, PSA were also somewhat evident.

The second factor, Staff (m = .08, SD = .28), captured two different aspects, both of which resulted in nearly "no evidence" provided. Evidence for Staff came from staff promotional incentives, such as links highlighting specific staff members who have the ability to offer discounts or deals to potential users. However, links or pages devoted to individual staff members were never found. Other evidence of staff came from determining if participants were matched with a specific staff member, helping to account for individual difference. This too was found to be nearly non existent.

The third Promotional Mix factor consisted of two items, both of which are best understood individually and will be discussed as single item factors. "Very little evidence" was provided for the item, Responding to Inquiries (m = .88, SD = 1.48). In this particular case, "Contact Us" buttons or simple contact information was not enough for "explicit evidence". The majority of the sites did an excellent job offering phone numbers, emails and other methods of contacting yet, for this item, a specific system needed to be evident for user inquiries. Ideally a system in place by the agency to allow them to easily respond to user inquires regarding promotional communication. Many sites asked for suggestions concerning the site itself, yet rarely were promotional inquiries sought after by the agency. A good example, although not "explicit evidence", is given in Figure 14. This figure shows a "Contact Us" page from the city of Prince George. The example shows the break down of the contact information. They highlight city hall, mayor and council contact information, singled out community recreation, offered files to fill out a specific report and asked for Web site feedback. However, nowhere in this example does it ask for feedback on specific promotional efforts. This example provides "some evidence" of a system in place to respond to user inquiries.

Figure 14. Responding to Inquiries

Contact Us

There are a few different ways to contact the city. Below are so me addresses and numbers you can use to reach us.

City Hall
City of Prince George
1100 Patricia Boulevard
Prince George, BC V2L 3V9
CANADA

City Hall hours are 8:30am - 5:00pm, Monday to Friday.

Email: Service Centre at servicecentre@city.pg.bc.ca
Telephone: Service Centre at (250) 561-7600
Fax: Service Centre at (250) 612-5605

Mayor and Council
Contact information for the Mayor and Councillors can be found along with other information on the Council Bios page.

Community Recreation
If you're looking for contacts to Community Associations and gro ups including sport and hobby groups, see our Community Recreation Contacts page.

File A Report
Report a pedestrian trip hazard
Report a pot hole
Report a street light problem

Website Feedback
Feedback about this website can be sent using our feedback form. All other concerns should be emailed to the Service Centre.

Staff Contact List
An Organizational Chart is available for an overview of the City's structure.

http://www.city.pg.bc.ca/pages/contact/ 1/10/2008

The next item concerned incentives, a traditional element in the Promotion Mix. Evidence for incentives could have included price reductions, samples and trials, coupons and prizes. Another figure from the Prince George Web site presents a “strong evidence” example of an incentive. Figure 15 shows a price reduction incentive for those who may be interested in swimming or going to the gym. Prince George has placed restrictions on the incentive such as the time it can be used and certain days when it does not apply. However, nearly no evidence was found for the factor Incentives (m = .20, SD = .79) in the overall sample and they were rarely stated on the Web pages.

Figure 15. Incentive

> **Swim or Attend the Gym for only a Toonie**
> Take advantage of our hot tub, dry sauna, fitness centre, or enjoy a leisurely swim at either aquatic facility.
>
> **Monday to Friday**: 12:00pm-1:00pm and 2:00pm-3:00pm
> **Monday to Thursday**: 9:00pm-10:00pm
>
> Toonie swims are not valid during special events, statutory holidays, school vacations, or professional development days. Not to be combined with any other coupon or discount offer. Swim for a Toonie before, during or after your child’s swimming lessons. Children who are registered for lessons may swim before or after their lessons for only a Toonie (Refer to aquatic schedule for swim times).

http://www.city.pg.bc.ca/rec_culture/aquatics/ 1/10/2008

The last factor used to represent the Promotion Mix was the single item for Personal Communication (m = .89, SD = .97). Again, “very little evidence” for this factor was found. Evidence for Personal Communication could have included feedback, contact information and email addresses. Yet, these criteria did not result in “explicit evidence”, only combined could these result in “some” to “strong evidence provided”. One-on-one personal communication between provider and user needed to be clear and/or stated to capture "explicit evidence". Similar to the factor, Responding to Inquires, the sites did an excellent job indicating how to contact the agency. This, however, will be better described when discussing Responsiveness.

Overall, the Promotional Mix factors fell well below the average level of evidence and were quite difficult to identify within these Web pages.

5.2.5 Q 1 e. Does the Web presence of PLSA show evidence of informing, persuading, educating and reminding?

The Communication Objective items tended to get at some of the same concepts as prior questions but were asked in a way that reflected the actual message of the communication message itself. In the Market Philosophy section the questions tended to focus more on the service and the people using the service, whereas the objective questions focused on communication and the message. Here, slightly higher than previous mean scores were evident for all four objectives, yet the majority of the scores were still below average. From Table 28 it is clear that the Informing objective is the most represented communication objective. Within Informing, two factors appeared. The first factor, Informational Messages ($m = 2.58$, $SD = .59$) indicated substantial evidence was provided, meaning that messages where clear, basic and simple to understand. For example, Figure 16 is a clear, simple message about a senior's oil painting class from the city of Lethbridge. Basic information such as where, when and who is delivering the service is given as well as the cost for service.

This factor also captured evidence of new services being announced and if terms of the services where given. This example, combined with the other pages in the Web trail resulted in “explicit evidence provided”. In the below example, terms of the service are given in a brief description of the class design.

Figure 16. Informational Messages

Oil Painting

This course is designed to introduce the beginner or intermediate painter to oil paint, brushes & techniques. All supplies will be included in the cost of this course.

Tuesdays 1st Class of Oil Painting

- **Time**:Tuesdays 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
- **Cost**:$28.00
- **Supple Fee**:$20.00 + $15.00 for video ($15.00 will be refunded when you return the video)
- **Instructor**:Yosh Hattori
- **Location**:Arts and Craft Room

Thursdays 1st Class of Oil Painting

- **Time**:Thursdays 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
- **Instructor**:Yosh Hattori
- **Cost**:$28.00
- **Supply Fee**:$20.00 + $15.00 for video ($15.00 will be refunded when you return the video)
- **Location**:Arts and Craft Room

http://www.lethseniors.com/   1/10/ 2008

The second Informing factor concerned the Length of the Message (m = 1.98, SD = .47), determining if the message was short or in depth. In this case, the average mean score indicated that messages were fairly short. Short messages, like the one in Figure 16, were considered a paragraph or less for a specific subject. Short messages are not necessarily a bad thing and, indeed would be considered an asset by many. However, within a short message it is more difficult to include aspects of communication associated with the other three objectives.

The Educating objective was characterized by three factors, one of which was a single item. Slightly above "very little evidence" was found for the first factor which simply captured Evidence of Educating (m = 1.35, SD = .47). Criteria here included if messages incorporated benefits, information on what to bring, as well as service description and design. A good example of Evidence of Educating came from a message about children's art programs from the city of Cornwall. Shown in Figure 17, the example below emphasizes benefits, such as fun and a take-home keepsake, which help add extra value to the class. The message also mentions something for the children to bring and gives a clean description about the class and what should be expected.

Figure 17. Evidence of Educating

Leisure Arts Program - Winter & Spring 2008

Children's Programs...

Make-it Take-it classes for boys and girls will feature theme-based crafts. Sign up for as many classes as you wish, wear old clothes and come prepared for fun. Younger students should be able to cut well with scissors and be able to print/copy simple words. Students will take home two or more crafts.

FALL SESSION

Arts and Crafts Workshops For Children

Saturday Morning Kids Club
10:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Ages 5 - 7
Cost: $12/workshop, $14.40 (Non Resident)

Saturday Afternoon Art Attack
1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
Ages 7 and Up
Cost: $16/Workshop, $19.20 (Non Residents)

All Classes are held at the Cornwall Public Library and instructed by Leah Prevost

Dates and Themes:

Saturday January 12	**Penguins**
Saturday January 26	**Snowmen**
Saturday February 9	**Valentine's Day Crafts**
Saturday February 23	**Winter Fun**
Saturday March 8	**Easter**
Saturday March 29	**Bunnies and Chicks**
Saturday April 12	**Dragons**

http://www.cornwall.ca/main.cfm?PageName=Leisure%20Arts%20Studio%20Program&Parent=Living 1/10/2008

Within the Educating items, frequently asked questions (FAQ) were examined to see if this was something agencies considered for the users. A few Web pages did contain links to FAQ but, in most cases, FAQ (m = .28, SD = 1.03) were non existent.

The last factor for Educating examined whether or not information about the people involved in the services were included. Similar to both the People factor in the Marketing Mix and the Staff factor in the Promotion Mix, the factor here, Educating with People (m = .42, SD = .60) resulted in well below average scores. Almost no evidence was found for staff delivering the program or of current users of the program.

The next Communication Objective consisted of two factors, Evidence of Persuading (m = 1.37, SD = .86) and Intentional Audience (m = 1.63, SD = 1.03), both of which indicated scores above "very little evidence". The first factor included if potential benefits were stated, such as emphasising a time to spend with family, re-connecting with nature or becoming more physically active. Benefits could be anything that helped add extra value for the receiver of the message. Words also helped in identifying a persuading objective. Descriptive words like *gorgeous* or *fantastic* helped to create images and evoke emotion within the receiver. Figure 18 illustrates a message from the City of Prince George regarding a new, youth, spring break swim class. This message emphasizes a number of possible benefits for a potential participant while highlighting key words throughout. This example shows "strong evidence of persuasion.

Figure 18. Persuading 1

Regular Admission Rates Apply.

SPRING BREAK

Spend your Spring Break at the pool where this year's theme is "Science and Water". Explore the AMAZING scientific fun facts of water and take part in experiments using water. Participate in games and activities where children, youth and families will learn more about the benefits of water, understand buoyancy, drag, propulsion, and resistance. Don't miss this exciting NEW Spring Break Event March 17th - 28th 2008.

http://www.city.pg.bc.ca/rec_culture/aquatics/ 1/10/2008

Gaining attention through messaging also helps indicate Persuasion. In this case, pictures and the design of the Web page came into consideration. Figure 19 below provides a good example of pictures designed to grab attention. On the Web page, they were coloured, depicted action and were clear. These pictures were also placed on the same Web page as the message above, concerning spring break swim classes. Together the message and the pictures showed "explicit evidence" of persuasion and this was scored as 4.0.

Figure 19. Persuading 2

http://www.city.pg.bc.ca/rec_culture/aquatics/ 1/10/2008

The second Persuading factor examined if messages where geared toward a specific group and if messages were for current or prospective users. It was clear from the mean score that the majority of messages were geared toward current users. A number of messages assumed that users are coming to the Web pages with previous knowledge of the particular service. This is somewhat expected if services are to be geared toward a target audience. For example, when providing information on bike trials, avid cyclists may come with an existing knowledge about the type of equipment they will need. As a result, information concerning equipment may be left out of the message because the agency has assumed readers will not need to know this. For non-users however, this could cause more difficultly in making a decision regarding biking participation.

The last Communication Objective included one factor, Evidence of Reminding (m = 1.36, SD = .63) and resulted in "very little evidence provided". Here, criteria included if messages were easy to remember (i.e., short, clear, and memorable). As well, if the Web site provided information on other media used, such as similar messages in leisure guides or other forms of communication. Surprisingly, within the Web pages used for this study, a low number indicated other means of communication. The majority of the messages were quite clear, simple and easy to read, yet, they were not overly memorable. In other words, the majority of the messages were quite generic and only a small number stood out and were unforgettable.

5.3 RQ 2. Does the Web presence of PLSA show evidence of The New Public Service approach?

Table 29. Mean Scores for The New Public Service (n = 100)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max	Range
New Public Service					
Factor 1: Citizen involvement	1.35	.85	0	4	4
Factor 2: Opportunity	2.04	.97	0	4	4
Factor 3: Administrative Control	2.38	.45	2	4	2

Based on an index from 0 to 4
0-No evidence provided, 1-Very little evidence provided, 2-Some evidence provided, 3-Strong evidence provided, 4-Explicit evidence provided

Table 29 depicts the factors used to represent The New Public Service. Factor 3, Administrative Control, received a higher mean score compared to the other two factors, Citizen Involvement and Opportunity. None of the factors indicated “strong or explicit evidence” provided. Mean scores where decided based on a summary of the pages in each Web trail.

Citizen Involvement (m = 1.35, SD = .85) generated the lowest mean score and indicated slightly above “very little evidence”. This factor score was determined by looking for evidence of citizen involvement and empowerment. Many Web pages encouraged involvement by using phrases such as “Your opinion counts!” or “We encourage you to get involved” helping to indicate some evidence of Citizen Involvement. On one Web page from Brantford it was clearly stated that citizens, “contribute to the city they love” showing “strong evidence” of citizen contribution. As shown in Figure 20, a portion of content from a Chatham-Kent Web page provides an explicit example of Citizen Involvement. From this page it is clear that the steering committee for a Trails Master Plan is seeking contribution from citizens and encouraging participation.

Figure 20. Citizen Involvement

A Study Steering Committee has been formed to guide the study and includes representatives from a number of trail stakeholder groups, municipal staff and trail planning and design specialists. Chatham-Kent has retained a team of trail planning specialists that includes the MMM Group, Stantec Consulting and Go for Green to assist the Steering Committee and municipal staff in the development of this plan.

•Watch for newsletters providing study updates that will be posted on Chatham-Kent's web site www.chatham-kent.ca
•Provide written comments to the study team regarding your suggestions for trails in Chatham-Kent;
•Attend public consultation meetings. The date, time and location of future meetings will be posted on the Municipality's web site and in local papers;
•Complete the Trails Questionnaire that will be available on the Chatham-Kent web site in early November 2007.

HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?
Except for personal information, all comments received will be on public record.

Consultant Project Manager
Mr. Dave McLaughlin,
MES, MCIP, RPP
Senior Project Manager, Associate Partner
MMM Group Limited
80 Commerce Valley Drive East
Thornhill, ON L3T 7N4
Phone: 905.882.4211 Ext. 520
Fax: 905.882.7277

Phone: 519.352.7354
Ext. 4254
Fax: 519.352.4241
E-mail: tomb@chatham-kent.ca

http://www.chathamkent.ca/recreation+and+tourism/recreation+and+parks/parks/commnity+parks/Chatham-Kent+Trails+Master+Plan.htm 1/9/2008

The second factor, Opportunity (m = 2.04, SD, .97) indicated “some evidence” was provided. The Opportunity factor primarily concerned whether or not programs, services and the agency as a whole were accessible for all community members. This not only involved leisure access programs and subsidy option but included evidence of openness and ease of access for a wide rage of individuals. Figure 21 offers an example indicating Opportunity. In this example, the City of Sault Ste. Marie shows clear evidence that they are providing accessible opportunity to seniors. In this particular example, a range of programs are offered for a range of individual seniors. Seniors, as a demographic, were common to most Web sites along with other more typical targeted demographics. For example, children, youth and stay at home moms. Although these are worthy groups to target, within the leisure presence of these ten Web sites, there was a distinct lack of evidence for the diversity of communities. In other words, breaking down these demographics further, examining other variables or considering completely different demographics all together. None the less, for the groups that were identified, accessible opportunities were fairly clear.

Figure 21. Opportunity

Drop-In Centre

The Senior Citizens' Drop-In Centre located at 619 Bay Street is a fully accessible facility, housing an auditorium, kitchen, lounge, craft room, games room, computer room, HAM radio room and two multi-purpose rooms. The centre is open Monday to Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with evening and weekend bookings by request.

The Centre works in cooperation with an Advisory Council comprised of representatives from local seniors' organizations.

•Programs offered encompass the areas of Active Living, Arts & Crafts, Educational, Bus Trips, Special Events and Health Related Services.
•The Centre is easily accessible by car or city bus. There is an enclosed bus shelter at the front of the Centre and parking is available at the rear of the building.

•Services offered include:
•Trained staff who are available to answer questions regarding senior citizens services. Inquires are handled by phone or directly at the Centre.
•Community Liaison with local senior groups and agencies within Sault Ste. Marie.
•The Senior Circular -- A newsletter published by the Senior Citizen Advisory Council.
•Health related services provided by community agencies on site.
•Unique summer events are planned by students who operate the Up, Out and Away Program
•Senior Games, an annual week long event hosting sixteen events to promote healthy active living, fun and fellowship.
•Volunteers are always welcome and encouraged to ensure the success of programs.
•Personal tours of the facility can be arranged upon request.
•For further information call (705) 254-6474

http://www.city.sault-ste-marie.on.ca/Article_Page.aspx?ID=278&deptid=1 1/10/2008

Indicating "some evidence" provided, the third factor, Administratively Focused (m – 2.38, SD = .42) also generated above average mean scores. Criteria here included if programs and services were predominantly operated by agency members and if control of the services were powered by the agency or through collaboration with the community. Evidence here accumulated based on a number of small observations, for example, the wording used for the possession of services. Do messages include, *ours, yours, the people's* the *City's* or are they constructed in a way that leaves this up to the reader's discretion. Other observations were more obvious, such as the example provided in Figure 22. Here, the city of Brantford uses a headline entitled CORPORTE NEWS on their city home page to inform users of the upcoming news taking place within the various city departments. The word "corporate" alone was interpreted as providing "strong evidence" that programs and services are controlled internally like a typical corporate business.

Figure 22. Administratively Focused

http://www.brantford.ca/content/publishing.nsf/Content/Home 1/9/2008

5.4 RQ 3. How well designed is PLSA Web presence in terms of layout, maintenance and integration?

Table 30. Mean Scores for Design (n = 100)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max	Range
Design					
Layout					
Factor 1: Design and layout features	2.23	.72	1	4	3
Factor 2: Surface layout	2.96	.54	2	4	2
Maintenance					
Factor 1:Maintenance	1.66	1.07	0	4	4
Integration					
Factor 1: Integration	3.88	.41	2	4	2

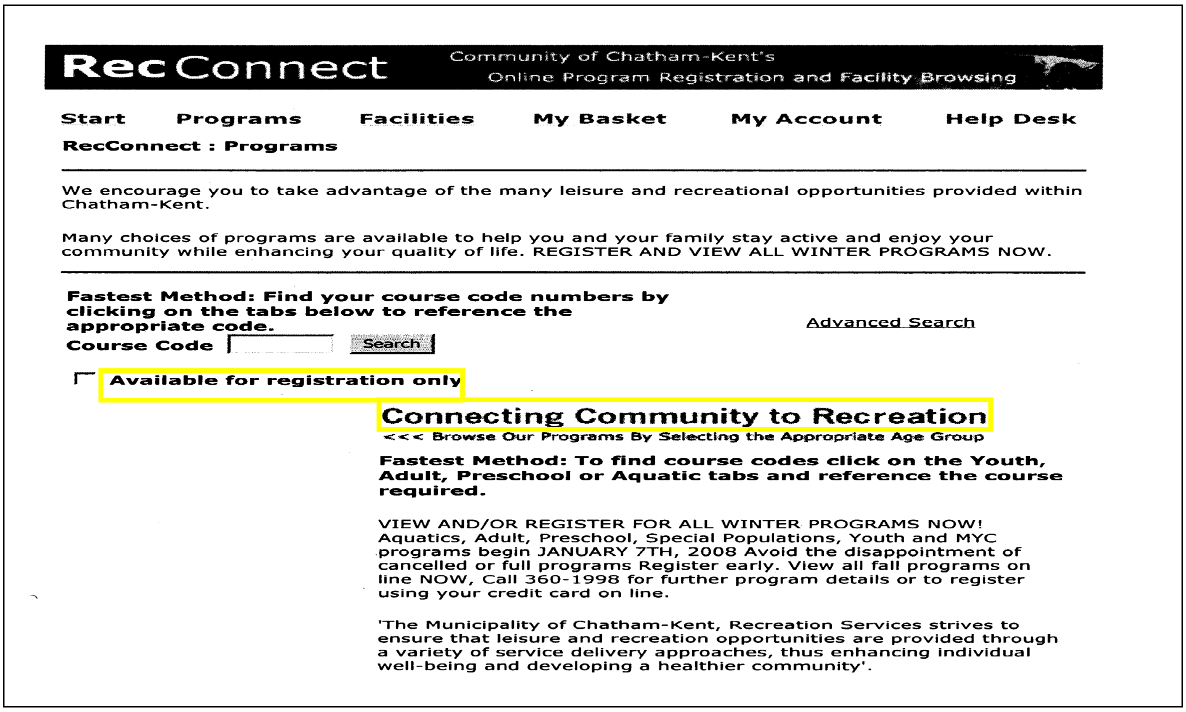
Based on an index from 0 to 4
0 =Very Poor, 1= Poor, 2= Adequate, 3= Good and 4= Excellent

The results from the third research question generated more positive results than the first and second questions. The overall designs of the sites were found to be quite good. As shown in Table 30, the majority of factors contributing to Design were above average. Like the two previous research questions, the mean scores for Design were determined based on a summary of the Web pages per each trail. However, frequencies of specific attributes found within a trail and the number of pages forming the Web trail become more of a determining factor with many of the Design items. Similar to the first section these items were measured with a five point scale, however, responses were based on quality rather than level of evidence.

With the exception of Maintenance the factor scores for Design fell between adequate and good. This was clear for both mean scores attached to Layout, Design and Layout

Features (m =2.23, SD = .72) and Surface Layout (m =2.96, SD = .54). Criteria for Design and Surface Layout included four specific areas: (1) The use of basic technology. For example, did the sites uses signpost, menus, sitemaps, have scroll down option, functioning hyperlinks and easy search options? (2) Incorporated entertainment into technology. Were videos, animation or Webcams used? (3) The use of innovative technology. For example, the City of Chatham-Kent used a system called Rec-Connect for their online registration. Shown in Figure 23, Rec-Connect was considered innovative compared to the other Web pages used in this study (4) The utilization of pictures and graphics. The number of pictures per each trail were determined, the size of the picture, and subject matter at hand where important factors. As well, the sophistication of the picture was considered; were the pictures clear and in colour and was the background space and text in balance? The colours used within the whole page were also assessed. Did they work well together? Was it pleasant to look at? Colour helps to provide a mood for any Web page.

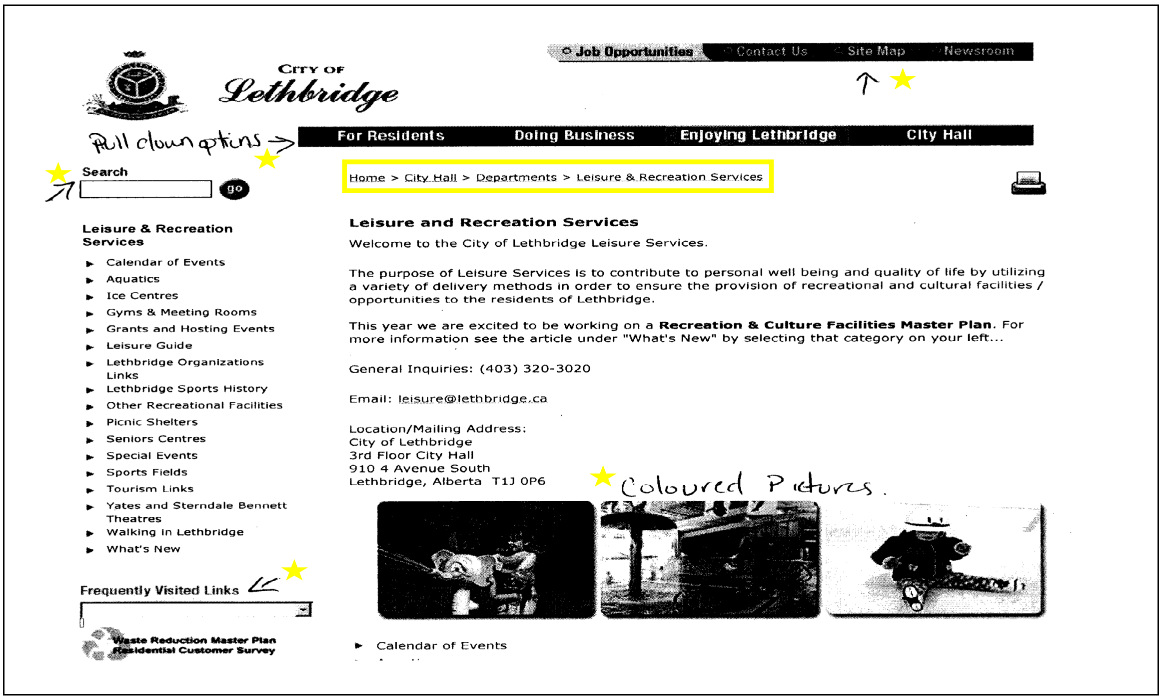
Figure 23. Innovative Technology



http://rec.city.chatham-kent.on.ca/Activities/Activities.asp?SCheck=732936377&SDT=39714.9348148148 1/9/2008

The second factor, Surface Layout considered if the layout of all these features was organized and clear. Criteria included if the placement of photos and text was too spacey? Were paragraphs too long or too short? Did information appear in logical order and categories? Were links found where expected? A strong example of both Design and Layout Feature and Surface Layout is given in Figure 24, a Web page from the City of Lethbridge. In this example, there is a good balance between white space, text and pictures. The pictures are in good colour, clear and contain real people doing activities. The top headings all have a pull down option which provided links to specific areas of the site. The list of links on the left of the page illustrated an exhaustive menu list. A site map option is available as well as navigational checkmarks near the top of the page. There is also a search option on the top left and a frequently visited links option below. The Leisure and Recreation Services page for the City of Lethbridge is very well laid out and indicated an excellent mean score.

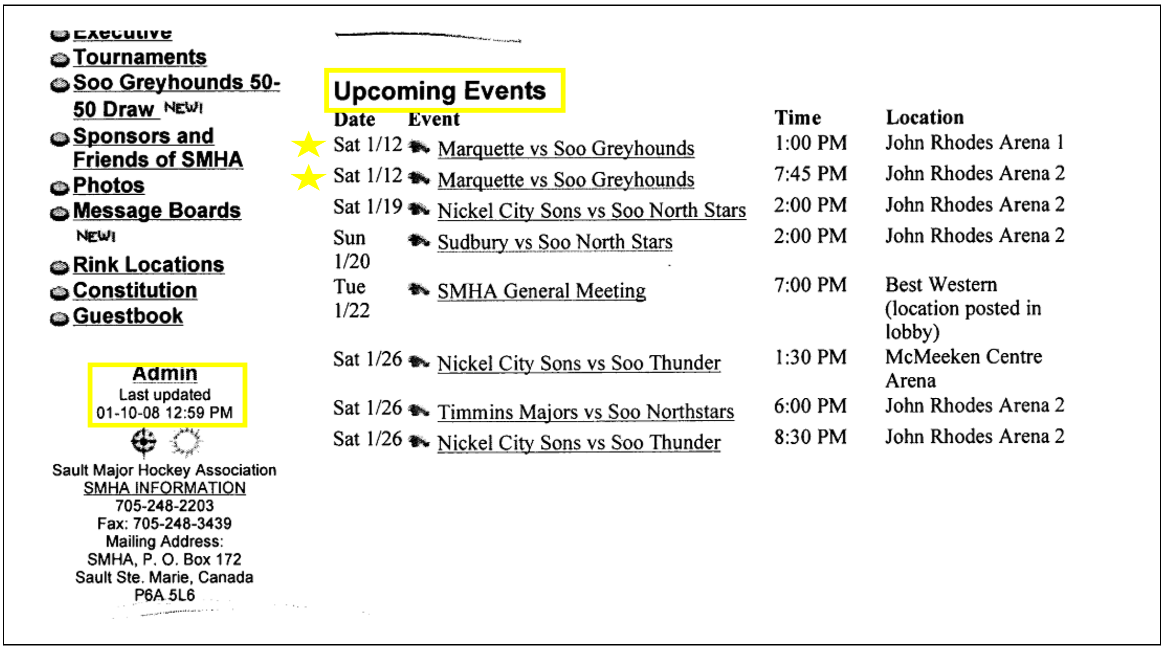
Figure 24. Design



http://www.lethbridge.ca/home/City+Hall/Departments/Leisure+and+Recreation+Services/default.htm 1/10/2008

The second category in the Design section assessed the level of maintenance for each Web trail. One factor, Maintenance (m = 1.66, SD, 1.07) was used for this category and below average results were evident with a mean score falling between poor and adequate. Criteria here included evidence of last updating, the current day's date and if the programs, services and events were for future dates (not for past dates). Surprisingly, not many sites included the time of last update or the current day's date. The majority of the programs, services and events were for future dates, yet not many sites highlighted the current week's specific events unless the user found the events page or calendar. An excellent example comes from a page off the Sault Ste. Marie's Hockey Association site. Figure 25 shows the date the page was opened in the far right bottom corner and the date the page was last updated, in the far left, were the same. This helped to indicate current maintenance. Also, the dates listed under Upcoming Events were all for future dates within the current month indicating that past event announcements are regularly culled.

Figure 25. Maintenance



http://eteamz.active.com/smha/index.cfm? 1/10/2008

The last category in Design concerned Integration, meaning there is consistency among the many pages which made up the leisure presence. Consistency in the colours used and the design elements were considered when moving though a trail. This category was the least complex out of the three and consisted of only one Factor, Integration (m = 3.88, SD,

.41). This factor scored very well and was easy to interpret as the majority of the Web pages easily resembled a consistent pattern. The one problem that did hinder Integration was the use of PDFs. Many times the PDF did not follow the same design pattern as the Web site. However, due to the low number of PDFs opened this did not become a major issue.

5.5 RQ 4 Revised. How well is the delivery of service quality in terms of efficiency, systems availability, responsiveness and customization within PLSA Web presence?

Table 31. Mean Scores for Electronic Service Quality (n = 100)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max	Range
Efficiency					
Factor 1: Speed	3.87	.44	1	4	3
Factor 2: Ease of Use	3.07	.72	1	4	3
Item: Links	1.43	1.18	0	4	4
Systems Availability					
Factor 1:Systems availability	3.88	.52	1	4	3
Responsiveness					
Factor 1: Responsiveness	2.13	.54	1	3	2
Customization					
Factor 1: Personalization	.57	.95	0	4	4
Factor 2: Interaction	2.44	.70	1	4	3

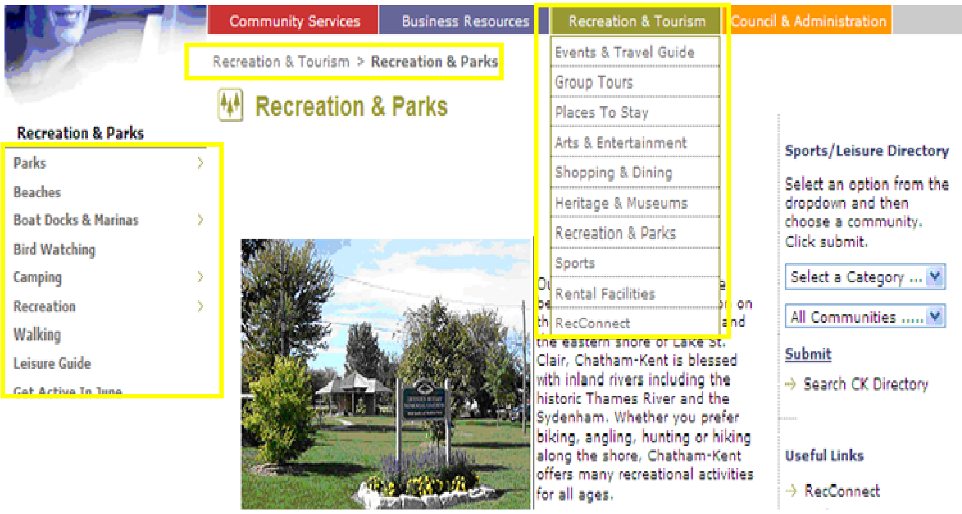
Based on an index from 0 to 4
0 =Very Poor, 1= Poor, 2= Adequate, 3= Good and 4= Excellent

Research question four provided mixed results. Originally this question included Privacy and Fulfillment but was revised when limited responses were collected for these elements. The two factors representing Efficiency had mean scores indicating good to excellent. However, there was also a single item factor, Links, which was not as evident. This meant that the majority of Web pages did not have strong relevant links. Systems Availability was executed extremely well on the Web pages. Responsiveness generated slightly above average results. Yet, the two factors representing customization were split. Personalization on the Web pages was extremely low while interaction components were above average. These scores were determined based on a summary of pages in each Web trail and indicated a level of quality, poor to excellent.

The first factor representing Efficiency dealt with the speed and timing of navigating the sites. Criteria here included the time it took for pages to load and fully enable, if all clicks moved to a new page and if there were no missing link messages. In most cases, manoeuvring through the sites was very timely and the majority of the pages opened quickly. The factor, Speed ($m = 3.87$, $SD = .44$) indicated consistently excellent results. Waiting for PDF's and leisure guides to open was the one occasional problem which slowed down the speed of navigation.

The second factor examined Ease of Use, which helped to determine if moving through the site was easy and if navigation was successful. This particular factor, Ease of Use ($m = 3.07$, $SD = .72$) also scored above average and indicated good results. Evidence which helped to determine easy navigation included the amount and quality of menus (the list of hyperlink options on the side and top of Web pages). Menu lists most regularly appear on the left hand side of the page as well as the top. These lists should be fairly exhaustive and specific but not too overwhelming. Top menus, or major headings, were best when they also offered *pull down* options with further page headings. An example of excellent menus is shown in Figure 26. The Recreation and Parks page from the Community of Chatham–Kent Page included side menus with specific headings relevant to recreation and parks, some of which include pull down options with further subject areas. Along the top of the page are the four major headings which appear within the whole site and stay as constant reference throughout, these too have pull down options. Pages with pull down options typically trace the pages that have been opened, showing the user where they have been. This navigational feature is often referred to as “breadcrumbs”, which displays all visited pages leading from the home page to the currently viewed pages and all pages are linked for easy backward navigation (Web Design Practices, 2005). A breadcrumbs route is also shown in Figure 26, only two pages were indicated as opened in this figure to get to the Recreation and Parks page. Pages with a variety of hyperlink options typically indicated more than one navigational route, both a quick and long route to the desired page. The number of clicks it took to complete a trail was also considered for ease of use.

Figure 26. Ease of Use



http://www.chatham-kent.ca/recreation+and+tourism/recreation+and+parks/recreation+and+parks+home.htm 1/9/2008

The last factor for Efficiency was a single item factor used to asses the number of links offered to relevant external sites. Surprisingly, the Links factor (m = 1.43, SD, = 1.18) was well below average and resulted in a score between very poor and poor. In this case Web sites offered some external links, yet, generally only appeared on one page. To be considered good or excellent, external links were needed on more than one page per Web trail and needed to be relevant to the content of the page.

Systems Availability, characterized by the technical functioning of the site, was the second category for E-SQ. This category contained one factor, simply called, Systems Availability (m = 3.88, SD = .52). This factor indicated very strong results. Criteria here included whether or not pages worked correctly, if the pages launched and ran right way, and if the overall site worked correctly. Similar to the speed factor used in Efficiency, these aspects of the Web sites showed high quality.

The next category was Responsiveness and like Systems Availability contained only one factor. An Adequate score for the Responsiveness factor (m = 2.13, SD = .54) was found. Responsiveness was characterized by the quality of support offered to users regarding problems, concerns or suggestions. In this study, opportunities to give feedback such as providing phone numbers, email addresses, surveys, questionnaires, community meetings and other forms of contact information helped to determine Responsiveness. The amount of contact information was also taken into account. Did contact information appear on just one page or on multiple pages throughout a Web trail? Providing an agency member's name was also considered here. If agency members were listed by position and department it helped add to responsiveness. Figure 27 is presented to show a strong example of Responsiveness. This example shows two pages from Cape Breton. One page contained contact information highlighting the name, position and sufficient contact information of the agency member. The other page was devoted to feedback, not only feedback about the functioning of the site but anything users would like to share.

Figure 27. Responsiveness

Cape Breton Regional Municipality
Website Feedback

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality welcomes any general comments or concerns that you may have regarding anything you see on this website. Please feel free to contact with us using the contact information below.

Mailing Address:
Cape Breton Regional Municipality
320 Esplanade
Sydney, Nova Scotia
B1P 7B9

E-Mail cbrm@cbrm.ns.ca
Phone / Fax Phone: (902) 563-5005

Management	**Contacts**	**Telephone**
320 Esplanade Sydney, N.S. B1P 7B9	Fred Brooks, Senior Recreation Manager ftbrooks@cbrm.ns.ca	 (902) 563-5510
	Frank Bruleigh, Recreation Manager wfbruleigh@cbrm.ns.ca	(902) 563-5510
320 Esplanade Sydney, N.S. B1P 7B9	Krista Dove, Administrative Assistant kldove@cbrm.ns.ca	 (902) 563-5510
Area Program Coordinators	**Contacts**	**Telephone**
Louisbourg/Marion Bridge And Area 7495 Main Street Louisbourg, N.S. B1C 1H6	Cindy Hynes chynes@cbrm.ns.ca	(902) 733-2351 (902) 727-2778

http://www.cbrm.ns.ca/portal/contact/feedback.asp 12/13/1007

The last E-SQ category attempted to examine Customization, determining how interactive pages were and how easy the information could be tailored to individual users. Two factors were used to represent Customization. The first factor, Personalization (m= .57, SD = .95) indicated very poor results. Furthermore, the majority of the leisure Web pages did not give personal attention or have features that could store personal preferences. One page from Prince George offered an option to input a login and password, however, it was unclear what this was. Only a few pages had options to input a user's name and personal information this, however, was mostly for program registration. Registration software used by Chatham-Kent allowed for users to customize their search options to the programs in which they may be interested. Overall this factor was not well represented.

The second factor, on the other hand, Interaction (m = 2.44, SD = .70) was represented fairly adequately. Basically this factor was evaluated based on a number of previous items. Criteria here included the evidence of feedback mechanism and an indication of specific user needs, as well as an ability to offer specific suggestions to users with the use of hyperlinks and pull down options.

5.6 RQ 5. Does the Web presence of PLSA differ by region with respect to marketing/ communication efforts, new public service concepts, design and electronic service quality?

Keeping with traditional significant testing common in social science research, significance was assessed at the .05 level. A series of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were preformed to assess differences between four regions. The regions were made up as follows: East- Cape Breton, Charlottetown, Quebec- Drummondville, Central- Cornwell, Brantford, Chatham Kent, Sault Ste. Marie, West- Lethbridge, Chilliwack, Prince George. Quebec was removed from the Central region as it was decided that Drummondville, QB alone had distinctive characteristics worth highlighting. The one-way ANOVA procedure was used to test the hypothesis that the group means of the dependent variable are equal, in other words that the means of two or more groups are not significantly different.

According to the four ANOVAs conducted, the null hypothesis (average scores are equal) was rejected as 22 factors out of 62 reported a statistical significant difference, which is more than would happen by chance. Considering the low number, a regional difference is evident within the 10 Web sites used. In general, and as indicated in the seven tables below, the West region produced the highest mean scores while the East produced the lowest scores. To examine more specifically which means differ significantly, the Tukey's post hoc comparison test was used. The Tukey's test is a widely used procedure that helps determine which pairs of groups differ from one another.

Table 32 shows regional differences for the marketing and communication factors. It appears as though there is a difference between the four regions when examining Marketing Strategy. Two factors, Impact on Society ($F = 7.997$, $S = < .001$) and Client Input showed statistically significant differences between the four regions. It is clear that the East ($m = 1.34$, $SD = .91$) showed the weakest evidence of a Marketing Philosophy. More specifically, the East showed less evidence of an awareness on the impact the agency had on society than both the Central and Western regions. Yet, with Client Input, the East and West differed significantly from Quebec (m = 1.90, SD = .74) which showed the highest evidence of Client Input.

For the most part, the regions did not differ greatly when examining the nine factors used to access the evidence of Goals. Two factors did show a significant difference between the regions however. Overall Planning (f = 10.567, S = < .001) was represented lowest in the East (m = .82, SD = .83) and highest in the Quebec region (m = 1.84, SD = 1.01). Quebec had a higher mean score than the three other regions on Overall Planning, while the East and West did not differ nor did the West and Central. The main difference that stood out in the second factor, External Environment (F = 5.454, S = .002) was between the Central region (m = .99, SD = .71) and the East (m = 1.48, SD = .44).

In terms of identifying a user with a specific term, the only difference found in Language Used to Identify Groups was with the label Residents (F = 2.888, S = .040). Yet, the post hoc test revealed that no difference was found. This may be due to the fact that the three highest mean scores, Quebec (m = .40, SD = 1.27), Central (m = .80, SD = 1.62) and West (m = 1.47, SD = 1.96) also indicated high standard deviation, compared to the lowest mean score from the East (m = .20, SD = .89). A high standard deviation indicates that there was more variance within the groups.

Indicated on Table 32 as well, the Marketing Segmentation category showed no difference between the four regions. In terms of Target Marketing the four regions are similar.

Table 32. Marketing Strategy Analysis of Variance by Region

	Region	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F Value	Test Statistic < .05
Client orientation	1 East	20	1.31	1.27		
	2 Quebec	10	1.27	.89	1.061	**.369**
	3 Central	40	1.71	1.21		
	4 West	30	1.28	1.09		
Impact on society	1 East	20	1.34 [a]	.91		
	2 Quebec	10	1.73 [a]	.38	7.997	**< .001**
	3 Central	40	1.59 [a, b]	.91		
	4 West	30	2.36 [b]	.67		
Client input	1 East	20	1.15 [a]	.99		
	2 Quebec	10	1.90 [b]	.74	2.767	**< .001**
	3 Central	40	1.75 [a, b]	.67		
	4 West	30	1.63 [a]	.96		
Overall planning	1 East	20	.82 [a]	.83		
	2 Quebec	10	2.62 [c]	.46	10.567	**<.001**
	3 Central	40	1.84 [b]	1.01		
	4 West	30	1.54 [a, b]	.85		
Developing current direction	1 East	20	.25	.28		
	2 Quebec	10	.63	.71	1.933	**.129**
	3 Central	40	.65	.78		
	4 West	30	.41	.67		
Focused	1 East	20	1.97	.21		
	2 Quebec	10	2.13	.50	1.193	**.317**
	3 Central	40	2.15	.39		
	4 West	30	2.10	.34		
External environment	1 East	20	1.48 [b]	.44		
	2 Quebec	10	1.35 [a, b]	.34	5.454	**.002**
	3 Central	40	.99 [a]	.71		
	4 West	30	1.45 [a, b]	.42		
Communication person	1 East	20	1.95	1.28		
	2 Quebec	10	1.40	1.08	1.849	**.143**
	3 Central	40	1.25	1.41		
	4 West	30	1.03	1.50		
Online registration	1 East	20	1.00	1.38		
	2 Quebec	10	.10	.32	2.295	**.083**
	3 Central	40	.78	1.25		
	4 West	30	.40	.68		
Feedback	1 East	20	.30	.57		
	2 Quebec	10	.40	.70	.714	**.546**

	Region	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F Value	Test Statistic < .05
	3 Central	40	.25	.74		
	4 West	30	.10	.55		
New markets and services	1 East	20	.58	.63		
	2 Quebec	10	.45	.80	1.106	**.351**
	3 Central	40	.70	.76		
	4 West	30	.87	.73		
Program limitation	1 East	20	.00	.00		
	2 Quebec	10	.20	.63	1.081	**.361**
	3 Central	40	.10	.38		
	4 West	30	.03	.18		
Clients	1 East	20	.00	.00		
	2 Quebec	10	.40	1.27	1.451	**.233**
	3 Central	40	.10	.63		
	4 West	30	.00	.00		
Customers	1 East	20	.00	.00		
	2 Quebec	10	.00	.00	.772	**.512**
	3 Central	40	.00	.00		
	4 West	30	.13	.73		
Citizens	1 East	20	.20	.89		
	2 Quebec	10	.00	.00	1.474	**.227**
	3 Central	40	.10	.63		
	4 West	30	.53	1.38		
Participants	1 East	20	.00	.00		
	2 Quebec	10	.00	.00	.452	**.717**
	3 Central	40	.05	.32		
	4 West	30	.13	.73		
Residents	1 East	20	.20 [a]	.89		
	2 Quebec	10	.40 [a]	1.27	2.888	**.040**
	3 Central	40	.80 [a]	1.62		
	4 West	30	1.47 [a]	1.96		
Visitors	1 East	20	.20	.89		
	2 Quebec	10	.00	.00	2.433	**.070**
	3 Central	40	.60	1.45		
	4 West	30	.00	.00		
Target Markets	1 East	20	1.14	1.14		
	2 Quebec	10	1.19	1.07	.560	**.643**
	3 Central	40	1.43	1.09		
	4 West	30	1.48	1.00		

Based on an index from 0 to 4. Cities in each Region: **East**- Cape Breton, Charlottetown, **Quebec**- Drummondville, **Central**- Cornwell, Brantford, Chatham Kent, Sault Ste. Marie, **West**- Lethbridge, Chilliwack, Prince George. Based on the Tukey's Post Hoc. the mean difference is significant at the .05 level. Mean scores with different superscript are different from each other.

Table 33 also shows there is a difference between regions when assessing evidence of the Marketing Mix. All four traditional Ps had at least one factor showing a significant difference between regions. The factor, Service Quality Aspect, representing Product, indicated that only the West and Quebec differed. The West (m = 1.77, SD = .44) was best at showing evidence of Service Quality Aspects while Quebec (m = 1.12, SD = .47) was not as strong. Location Importance (F = 6.451, S = .001), a factor used in Place, also showed Quebec (m = .50, SD = .61) with the least evidence. However, in this case both the Central and Eastern regions did not differ from Quebec. The Western region (m = 1.49, SD = .91) differed from both Quebec and the Central regions, and showed the strongest evidence of an importance given to the location of facilities for programs and services.

Within the Price component of the Marketing Mix, one factor, Subsidy Options (F = 5.272, S = .002) showed that a statistical significant difference existed between regions and that the East (m = 1.30, SD = 1.84) was different from all other regions with the highest evidence of subsidy options.

As shown in Table 33, the last factor within the Marketing Mix that indicated a difference represented Promotion. This factor only indicated a weak statistical difference. Cost Awareness (F = 3.009, S = .034) reported a test statistic very close to .05. After the Tukey's post hoc test, it was clear that the regions did not differ significantly due to the similar mean scores.

Table 33. Marketing Mix Analysis of Variance by region

	Region	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F Value	**Test Statistic < .05**
Communicates service name	1 East	20	1.43	1.18		
	2 Quebec	10	1.13	1.28	1.771	**.158**
	3 Central	40	1.32	1.21		
	4 West	30	1.92	1.27		
Service quality aspects	1 East	20	1.35 [a, b]	.65		
	2 Quebec	10	1.12 [a]	.47	4.664	**.004**
	3 Central	40	1.39 [a, b]	.61		
	4 West	30	1.77 [b]	.44		
Physical evidence	1 East	20	.72	.73		
	2 Quebec	10	.97	.84	1.483	**.224**
	3 Central	40	.90	.88		
	4 West	30	1.24	1.08		
Equity Model	1 East	20	.74	.10		
	2 Quebec	10	.83	.12	2.200	**.093**
	3 Central	40	.71	.19		
	4 West	30	.76	.08		
Cooperation/Partners	1 East	20	.59	.61		
	2 Quebec	10	1.20	1.17	1.765	**.159**
	3 Central	40	.91	.80		
	4 West	30	1.09	.92		
Availability	1 East	20	.85	.83		
	2 Quebec	10	.87	.69	.337	**.799**
	3 Central	40	1.01	.83		
	4 West	30	1.07	.92		
Location importance	1 East	20	.83 [a, b]	.83		
	2 Quebec	10	.50 [a]	.61	6.451	**.001**
	3 Central	40	.78 [a]	.71		
	4 West	30	1.49 [b]	.91		
Accessibility	1 East	20	.53	.62		
	2 Quebec	10	.15	.47	1.472	**.227**
	3 Central	40	.19	.70		
	4 West	30	.22	.61		
General Price	1 East	20	.26	.57		
	2 Quebec	10	.14	.44	1.971	**.123**
	3 Central	40	.17	.52		
	4 West	30	.54	.94		
Online payment	1 East	20	.25	.72		
	2 Quebec	10	.00	.00	1.525	**.213**

	Region	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F Value	**Test Statistic < .05**
	3 Central	40	.08	.27		
	4 West	30	.40	1.10		
Subsidy options	1 East	20	1.30 [b]	1.84		
	2 Quebec	10	.20 [a]	.63	5.272	**.002**
	3 Central	40	.15 [a]	.70		
	4 West	30	.30 [a]	1.02		
Audience	1 East	20	1.10	.88		
	2 Quebec	10	1.08	.73	1.051	**.374**
	3 Central	40	1.46	.92		
	4 West	30	1.27	.83		
Cost Awareness	1 East	20	.67 [a]	.29		
	2 Quebec	10	.63 [a]	.33	3.009	**.034**
	3 Central	40	.90 [a]	.47		
	4 West	30	.72 [a]	.18		
Additional Info	1 East	20	.75	.62		
	2 Quebec	10	.35	.41	1.658	**.181**
	3 Central	40	.48	.54		
	4 West	30	.50	.51		
Evidence of people	1 East	20	1.08	.77		
	2 Quebec	10	.75	.72	.659	**.579**
	3 Central	40	.99	.92		
	4 West	30	.82	.66		

Based on an index from 0 to 4. Cities in each Region: **East**- Cape Breton, Charlottetown, **Quebec**- Drummondville, **Central**- Cornwell, Brantford, Chatham Kent, Sault Ste. Marie, **West**- Lethbridge, Chilliwack, Prince George. Based on the Tukey's Post Hoc. the mean difference is significant at the .05 level. Mean scores with different superscript are different from each other.

There were also differences between regions with respect to The Promotion Mix. Table 34 shows that the first factor, Non-Personal (F = 7.855, SD = < .001) indicated a statistical difference. Here the East and Central noted a difference between the West, while the West did not differ from Quebec. Non-Personal Communication was most evident in the West (m = 1.37, SD = .54) and least in the Central Region (m = .94, SD = .34). Responding to Inquires (F = 6.294, S = .001) was also strongest in the West (m = 1.67, SD = 1.73) and indicated a significant defence between both Quebec and the East.

The last factor in the Promotion Mix that indicated a statistical difference was Personal Communication (F = 2.730, S = .048). However, this factor showed a very weak difference, evident from the Test Statistic. An examination of the post hoc results revealed that the East (m = 1.25, SD = .91) was strongest in Personal Communication while the West (m =.53, SD = .73) was the weakest. Yet, due to the varying standard deviations there is not a significant difference.

Table 34. Promotion Mix Analysis of Variance by Region

	Region	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F Value	**Test Statistic < .05**
Non-Personal	1 East	20	1.00 [a]	.00		
	2 Quebec	10	1.25 [a, b]	.43	7.855	**< .001**
	3 Central	40	.94 [a]	.34		
	4 West	30	1.37 [b]	.54		
Staff	1 East	20	.03	.11		
	2 Quebec	10	.05	.16	.745	**.528**
	3 Central	40	.13	.35		
	4 West	30	.05	.27		
Responding to inquiries	1 East	20	.20 [a]	.62		
	2 Quebec	10	.00 [a]	.00	6.294	**.001**
	3 Central	40	.85 [a, b]	1.49		
	4 West	30	1.67 [b]	1.73		
Incentives	1 East	20	.00	.00		
	2 Quebec	10	.60	1.35	2.504	**.064**
	3 Central	40	.05	.32		
	4 West	30	.40	1.13		
Personal communication	1 East	20	1.25 [a]	.91		
	2 Quebec	10	1.20 [a]	.92	2.730	**.048**
	3 Central	40	.90 [a]	1.11		
	4 West	30	.53 [a]	.73		

Based on an index from 0 to 4. Cities in each Region: **East**- Cape Breton, Charlottetown, **Quebec**- Drummondville, **Central**- Cornwell, Brantford, Chatham Kent, Sault Ste. Marie, **West**- Lethbridge, Chilliwack, Prince George. Based on the Tukey's Post Hoc. the mean difference is significant at the .05 level. Mean scores with different superscript are different from each other.

The ANOVA results for the Communication Objectives are given in Table 35. A statistical difference was indicated between the four regions for three objectives. Informing, Persuading and Reminding all indicated difference and showed highest results in the West. All but one of the differing factors indicated the lowest scores were from the East. The regions did not differ when it came to the factors used for the Educating objective.

Informational Messages (F = 8.505, S = < .001) used to represent Informing, indicated a significant difference between the West (m = 2.99, SD = .37) and the three other regions. Length of Message (F = 6.125, S = .001) also used to represent Informing, indicated that the West (m = 2.17, SD = .41) differed from both the East and Quebec, yet did not differ for the Central region.

The factor, Intentional Audience (F = 5.355, S = .002) which was used for the Persuading objective, indicated that only the East (m = 1.00, SD = 1.10) and West (m = 2.12, SD = .90) were significantly different. The Reminding factor (F = 5.404, S = .002) indicated that the West (m = 1.96, SD = .60) differed significantly from the East and Quebec, yet did not differ from the Central regions.

Table 35. Communication Objectives Analysis of Variance by Region

	Region	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F Value	**Test Statistic < .05**
Informational messages	1 East	20	2.35 [a]	.63		
	2 Quebec	10	2.46 [a]	.42	8.505	**< .001**
	3 Central	40	2.43 [a]	.59		
	4 West	30	2.99 [b]	.37		
Length of message	1 East	20	1.68 [a]	.34		
	2 Quebec	10	1.75 [a]	.26	6.125	**.001**
	3 Central	40	2.04 [a, b]	.41		
	4 West	30	2.17 [b]	.56		

	Region	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F Value	**Test Statistic < .05**
Evidence of educating	1 East	20	1.23	.75		
	2 Quebec	10	1.17	.42	.563	**.641**
	3 Central	40	1.35	1.02		
	4 West	30	1.50	.83		
FAQ	1 East	20	.00	.00		
	2 Quebec	10	.40	1.27	2.481	**.066**
	3 Central	40	.10	.63		
	4 West	30	.67	1.52		
Using people	1 East	20	.50	.69		
	2 Quebec	10	.50	.71	.356	**.785**
	3 Central	40	.35	.55		
	4 West	30	.42	.57		
Persuasion	1 East	20	1.28	.74		
	2 Quebec	10	.87	.75	1.675	**.178**
	3 Central	40	1.43	.98	.	**.**
	4 West	30	1.53	.75		
Intentional audience	1 East	20	1.00 [a]	1.01		
	2 Quebec	10	1.65 [a, b]	.88	5.355	**.002**
	3 Central	40	1.58 [a, b]	1.02		
	4 West	30	2.12 [b]	.90		
Reminding	1 East	20	1.07 [a]	.47		
	2 Quebec	10	1.00 [a]	.44	5.404	**.002**
	3 Central	40	1.38 [a, b]	.68		
	4 West	30	1.67 [b]	.60		

Based on an index from 0 to 4. Cities in each Region: **East**- Cape Breton, Charlottetown, **Quebec**- Drummondville, **Central**- Cornwell, Brantford, Chatham Kent, Sault Ste. Marie, **West**- Lethbridge, Chilliwack, Prince George. Based on the Tukeys Post Hoc. the mean difference is significant at the .05 level. Mean scores with different superscripts are different from each other.

Table 36 shows that within the three factors used for The New Public Service, one factor showed a statistical significant difference within the four regions. Administrative Control (F = 2.97, S = .038) indicated that Quebec (m = 2.00, SD = .33) differed from all other regions and also reported the lowest mean score, indicating that Quebec showed the lowest evidence of administrative control. Here, however, it could be interpreted that a low mean score is a good thing rather than a bad thing.

Table 36. New Public Service Analysis of Variance by Region

	Region	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F Value	Test Statistic < .05
Citizen involvement	1 East	20	1.64	1.1		
	2 Quebec	10	1.26	.86	.972	**.409**
	3 Central	40	1.31	.90		
	4 West	30	1.26	.55		
Opportunity	1 East	20	1.68	.98		
	2 Quebec	10	1.75	.36	1.967	**.124**
	3 Central	40	2.10	1.13		
	4 West	30	2.28	.82		
Administrative control	1 East	20	2.38 [b]	.56		
	2 Quebec	10	2.00 [a]	.33	2.927	**.038**
	3 Central	40	2.45 [b]	.45		
	4 West	30	2.42 [b]	.35		

Based on an index from 0 to 4. Cities in each Region: **East**- Cape Breton, Charlottetown, **Quebec**- Drummondville, **Central**- Cornwell, Brantford, Chatham Kent, Sault Ste. Marie, **West**- Lethbridge, Chilliwack, Prince George. Based on the Tukeys Post Hoc. the mean difference is significant at the .05 level. Mean scores with different superscripts are different from each other.

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As shown in Table 37, the Design section did not show significant differences between regions. One factor out of the four used to represent Design indicated a test statistic of below .05, yet, showed no difference when examining the post hoc test. Design and Surface Layout (F = 4.097, S = .009) appeared to indicate a difference between regions, however, all four regions showed no discrepancy between one another. This may be due to the similarity within the mean scores which all indicated adequate results for design and layout features.

Table 37. Design Analysis of Variance by Region

	Region	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F Value	Test Statistic < .05
Design and layout features	1 East	20	2.01 [a]	.87		
	2 Quebec	10	2.35 [a]	.70	4.097	**.009**
	3 Central	40	2.05 [a]	.73		
	4 West	30	2.57 [a]	.46		
Surface layout	1 East	20	2.80	.54		
	2 Quebec	10	2.68	.69	2.169	**.097**
	3 Central	40	3.06	.51		
	4 West	30	3.01	.48		
Maintenance	1 East	20	2.08	1.37		
	2 Quebec	10	1.90	.27	2.622	**.055**
	3 Central	40	1.33	.93		
	4 West	30	1.74	1.11		
Integration	1 East	20	3.85	.49		
	2 Quebec	10	3.80	.42	.329	**,805**
	3 Central	40	3.93	.35		
	4 West	30	3.87	.43		

Based on an index from 0 to 4. Cities in each Region: **East**- Cape Breton, Charlottetown, **Quebec**- Drummondville, **Central**- Cornwell, Brantford, Chatham Kent, Sault Ste. Marie, **West**- Lethbridge, Chilliwack, Prince George. Based on the Tukeys Post Hoc. the mean difference is significant at the .05 level. Mean scores with different superscripts are different from each other.

Table 38 indicates that the two major differences between regions for the Electronic Service Quality factors were Efficiency and Responsiveness. Ease of Speed (F = 8.817, S = < .001), a factor used to represent Efficiency showed that Quebec (m = 2.20, SD = .81) differed significantly from the other regions. A single item factor, concerning Links to Relevant Sites (F = 3.200, S = .027) indicated a statistical difference between regions, yet no strong difference appeared after the post hoc. Similarly, no strong difference appeared with Systems Availability (F = 3.089, S = .031) which also indicated a Test statistic of less the .05 but showed no difference between regions. Responsiveness (F = 7.761, S = < .001) however, showed that the East (m = 2.54, SD = .37) is strongest in evidence of responsiveness and differs significantly from the West (m = 1.85, SD = .47) which indicated the lowest results.

Table 38. Electronic Service Quality Analysis of Variance by Region

	Region	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F Value	Test Statistic < .05
Speed	1 East	20	3.95	.22		
	2 Quebec	10	4.00	.00	1.592	**.196**
	3 Central	40	3.91	.28		
	4 West	30	3.73	.70		
Ease of Speed	1 East	20	2.86 [b]	.63		
	2 Quebec	10	2.20 [a]	.81	8.817	**< .001**
	3 Central	40	3.31 [b]	.66		
	4 West	30	3.18 [b]	.58		
The Web site has links to relevant sites	1 East	20	1.05 [a]	.95		
	2 Quebec	10	1.00 [a]	1.49	3.200	**.027**
	3 Central	40	1.85 [a]	.975		
	4 West	30	1.27 [a]	1.34		
Systems Availability	1 East	20	4.00 [a]	.00		
	2 Quebec	10	4.00 [a]	.00	3.089	**.031**
	3 Central	40	3.96 [a]	.15		
	4 West	30	3.64 [a]	.90		
Responsiveness	1 East	20	2.54 [b]	.37		
	2 Quebec	10	2.13 [a, b]	.63	7.761	**< .001**
	3 Central	40	2.13 [a, b]	.53		
	4 West	30	1.85 [a]	.47		
Personalization	1 East	20	.45	.55		
	2 Quebec	10	.90	1.11	1.652	**.183**
	3 Central	40	.74	1.17		
	4 West	30	.32	.72		
Interaction	1 East	20	2.32	.71		
	2 Quebec	10	2.17	.74	1.066	**.367**
	3 Central	40	2.47	.70		
	4 West	30	2.57	.67		

Based on an index from 0 to 4. Cities in each Region: **East**- Cape Breton, Charlottetown, **Quebec**- Drummondville, **Central**- Cornwell, Brantford, Chatham Kent, Sault Ste. Marie, **West**- Lethbridge, Chilliwack, Prince George. Based on the Tukeys Post Hoc. the mean difference is significant at the .05 level. Mean scores with different superscripts are different from each other.

Chapter 6
Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of the present study was to obtain a preliminary understanding of the Web presence of Canadian PLSA. A number of conclusions will be assessed in this chapter. This chapter will not follow the original format as the pervious chapters but will begin by discussing the Design and E-SQ elements. These are presented first because the findings offered in the latter section of this chapter are believed to be best understood in a general discussion, one that incorporates public marketing and community concepts.

In general, PLSA appear to recognize the importance of online communication. However, it appears that the leisure presence in municipal sites focuses mainly on core information-oriented content such as programs, services, facilities and events. It seems the surveyed agencies are weak in information that helps with decision making, such as content with added value, benefits and supportive information. This orientation limits PLSA from taking full advantage of the interactive nature of the Internet.

PLSA are not using the Web to its full potential. It could be said that they are at the preliminary stages of Web communication, meaning that the Web site is only used to present basic information, similar to the type of information found in traditional printed brochures.

6.2 Design

The Design section of the coding instrument assessed the quality of Web sites in terms of Layout, Maintenance, and Integration. The concepts that will be outlined in the following sections refer primarily to the third research question. Kotler (2007) recommended that it is best to keep things simple. This is exactly what the leisure presence of these sites demonstrated. They consisted of very simple, basic design but attained a level that appeared adequate when it came to the basic design and layout features. Every agency appeared to reassess its Web site's attractiveness, design and typography layouts somewhat regularly, yet there was also evidence that they did not do so frequently enough.

6.2.1 Layout and Integration

It was found that the Layout of PLSA Web pages was adequate and the balance between text and pictures was well done. Graphics and pictures where generally clear and in colour. Overall the sites appeared to be professional. This may be due to the strong level of Integration that the Web pages possessed. Integration refers to the message consistency, when design elements are all identical and ensure that style and tone fit the agency. Message and design consistency can help to enhance the credibility with a user and create a familiar feeling. All reviewed Web sites possessed a strong sense of credibility.

6.2.2 Maintenance

Agencies must constantly update their sites to keep them current and fresh. Evidence of Maintenance, however, was lacking on many sites. Although the majority of information was up-to-date there were not a lot of additional clues indicating evidence of maintenance or up-keep, such as evidence of updating within the last 24 hours or even the last three days. Presenting the last day of up-dating is refreshing for a user. “Fresh and updated information on a site can create a motivation to revisit a Web site, thereby offering an opportunity to build a relationship” (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2006, p.242).

Some of the dates on the sites were of past events and had yet to be taken down off the page. In general, this is not a good thing as it speaks to a lack of site maintenance. Some users, however, may be interested in past events - wanting to know when or where something took place or to view program outcomes. In this case, it may be best for sites to have a section devoted to past events. Posting past events within a designated hyperlink will give users an opportunity to investigate specific interests while allowing current events to be front and centre, as the majority of users are more likely interested in up-coming dates. This would also permit a space to provide ample information on past services, programs and events and could include photo or narrative based recollections.

6.3 Electronic Service Quality

Because greater percentages of the population are making use of the possibilities offered by the Internet, the novelty of electronic services tends to wear off, and users are less willing to tolerate poor service quality (Fassnacht & Koese, 2006): “If these channels are to be viable, they must be perceived by consumers as effective and efficient” (Parasuraman, et al,, 2005, p. 213). The public sector should be no exception, especially in context where services are directly delivered. The following will discuss concepts found in research question four.

Some authors argue that scales for measuring quality of electronic services will have to vary in different contexts, as the benefits sought from an electronic service also depend on the context (Fassnacht & Koese, 2006). For example, online shopping differs from online newspapers. Although the development of a scale was not the intention for adapting e-SQ aspects in this study, it is clear that the context of the Web site should be an underling consideration when determining a model for analysis. Because little was known about the Web content of PLSA, e-SQ was used to provide an extra set of guidelines when analyzing the Web sites.

Two of the original e-SQ dimensions were not accurately assessed in this study, both Privacy and Fulfillment. However, in terms of privacy, Grantz (1997) recognized that users may be sufficiently concerned about their privacy that registration has been shown to discourage site visitations. It is in the Internet marketers' best interests to have highly secure privacy and security standards. This has become more customary with Web sites we see today, yet, from this content analysis, the privacy dimension could not be assessed.

6.3.1 Efficiency and Systems Availability

The efficiency and Systems Availability dimensions of e-SQ adapted fairly well to this study. Efficiency is referred to by Parasuraman, et al. (2005) as the ease and speed of accessing the Web site. The way usability is engineered to make the content easy to read, interpret and use is considered efficiency and can have a significant impact on the uptake of information (Kuk, 2002). Systems Availability is referred to as the technical functioning of the Web site (Parasuraman, et al., 2005), ensuring that everything is running and launching smoothly. Efficiency and Systems Availability were found to be quite good within the studied Web sites. For the typical users, good navigational features are fairly easy to incorporate into a Web site design. Therefore, despite the excellent results for navigational features the high score may simply indicate that PLSA Web pages excelled at the general standards for a Web site. Furthermore, perhaps Systems Availability scores were high because the transactions and operating of the site during content collection were very basic and not intense. This research involved doing very basic navigation and no complicated transactions were completed.

Ease of use or usability is the degree to which technology can be used easily and satisfactorily. Functional Web sites must be simple and enhance success for a user when locating information. Therefore, the Web pages of PLSA demonstrated good quality overall in terms of Efficiency and Systems Availability.

6.3.1.1 Ease of Navigation

It appears that when contemplating the notion of design and navigational features, two potentially conflicting options come to mind; should the design help the user find what they want or should the design help them in finding the wealth of information within the Web site? Some believe it may be best to get users to what they want as quickly as possible (Web Master Media, 2005). Users must be able to move quickly in pursuit of their goals. If this is the objective, navigation tools such as top menus, side menus and breadcrumbs are not that important, because they will most likely be ignored when attempting to move quickly throughout the site. The majority of the studied Web sites all scored relatively high on navigational features, most likely due to following a standard Web site formula. According to a 2005 article from Web Master.com, navigational features are "at best ignored - at worst distracting"…they are "rarely needed, hard to interpret and takes up valuable space" (p.2). However, Kuk (2002), when discussing online service in the United Kingdom public sector, stated "Web site usability and navigation remain the key factors in determining e-government readiness and maturity" (p.354).

Design and navigational elements can often have both a positive and negative effect on communication. Communicational effects will often depends on the individual user's preference, what they are searching for and their distinctive interest in the site. Much time will be spent online for those individuals who regard information as highly important while less involved individuals will more often be quick, and require easy simple answers. Yet, how do we know what users' objectives or reasons for visiting PLSA pages are?

6.3.2 Customization

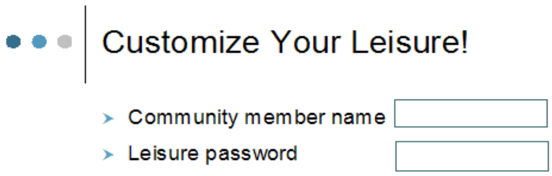
The notion of customization, an ability to offer users personalization and interactive information regarding their specific interests and decisions, is found to be the optimal solution to the question posed in the above paragraph. Customization techniques need to be included in Web sites and, like most design and navigational features should be easy and simple to use. Customization enables users to design their own Web page content and include only the content relevant to them. Thus, users control the message they see. The ability to tailor information and to give answers or information specific to an individual can obviously make Web sites a powerful relational building tool (Hallahan, 2003, p. 23)

6.3.3 "Customize Your Leisure!"

A one-time Web site encounter does not constitute a relationship. The repeated use of a Web site, or follow up contact, will help provide a higher level of connectedness.

One option for PLSA is to provide a customization system that allows all users to control the content of their own leisure interests. Through the use of personalization, when arriving at their official municipal site, a user can be presented with an option to sign in to their own leisure profile. Personalization involves delivery of user-specific content in response to prompts. Figure 29 indicates an example of utilizing personalization techniques. It is also important to note that most sites utilizing a sign in option have technology programmed to remember users and the users' passwords which helps with ease of navigation.

Figure 28. Customize Sign in Option



This study concluded that the use of personalization techniques in PLSA Web pages was extremely poor. Features offering personal or individual preference were rarely found within the existing PLSA Web presence. Within a "Customize Your Leisure" system, personalized pages would need to maintain a consistent layout and must include municipal logos and mission statements.

"Customize Your Leisure" could present opportunities for agencies to send customized messages through email, text messaging and social networking sites, like

MySpace or Facebook. Customization can also provide specific individualized information, such as program notifications and cancellation, upcoming programs, services and events, suggested related links, and opportunities for civic involvement, such as volunteering. It has been argued that some features, such as links, are highly associated with online user satisfaction. All links offered should be related to the user's own interest. According to Janal (1998) "every single link should move the prospect closer to their objective" (p.161). The evidence of relevant links within this study was found to be rather poor. The majority of highlighted suggested links were internal to the agency as opposed to external. External links have the opportunity to provide ample information regarding benefits and accounts pertaining to any interest. For example, when inquiring about volunteer opportunities a site could include links about why someone would want to volunteer or included benefits and stories from past volunteers. This may help to add further value for the user. Utilizing links to partnering pages is also a good option. Collaborating with other community organizations, such as the local hockey association, to incorporate information specific to one's activity involvement may be a great way to take advantage of a "Customize Your Leisure" type system.

Within such a system, access to online registration would ideally be available with all the up-to-date information on how such transactions take place. Surprisingly, few Web pages in this study indicated options for online registration. Whether or not the municipality or an outside contractor is used for registration purposes, this transaction should be easy and safe.

6.3.4 Responsiveness

An interactive aspect can be easily achieved through a customization system. Users can create a dialog with the agency to obtain information that answers their questions quickly, accurately and personally. Through "Customize Your Leisure" one can sign up for email updates indicating a notification about their account, such as schedule changes or current news. The use of email presents a great way to create a dialog with citizens. Emailing allows marketers to reach existing and potential users who actually want to receive information. In addition, citizens should be encouraged to send emails to the agency and the agency should be able to send a prompt reply. When online, users should be able to ask questions and volunteer feedback. It may also be beneficial to include options for personalized messaging sent to cell phones (via text-messaging) or to users' personalized Web pages such as Facebook. These types of options may be of particular interest for younger adults whose main source of electronic communication may no longer be email.

Furthermore, why are emails not made public? All of the sites in this study were found to be satisfactory in providing email contacts, but none presented the actual emails. For those emails that are not of private matters (and where consent is given from the sender) it may be a good idea to show emails, especially those emails that tend to be popular with similar responses. Indicating the action, if any, which was taken in responding to the email shows a great deal of responsiveness. Basically, this would resemble a discussion board included in the Web site. This will help to create a public dialog between officials and the public. Suggested topics could be presented from both parties. This would, however, require specific restrictions on the part of the agency and of the citizens, such as an expected time frame from the agency for a response and the appropriateness of message content. This could also act as a space to share leisure experiences.

If such a system is in place, agency members and staff should be encouraged to use and update these sites. Whether or not an outside Web contractor is updating the site there is a need for a full-time Web manager within the organization. These site managers should be working with a Web contractor and be aware of what needs to be included in the Web site and when it needs to appear. Staff should be able to contact them, informing of any notifications to their programs and services. Control of these sites needs to come from the agency and not be lost to those with Web site knowledge but no true understanding of the agency, its goals and the general public good.

Hallahan (2003) stated that “interactions with computers are actually more satisfactory when users don't think about the people behind them. People and organization related thoughts only frustrate users” (p. 20). Nonetheless, the agency must be responsive and interactive with the community members when attempting to create relationships. Responding to inquires and highlighting levels of citizen involvement shows that the agency is taking full advantage of the interactivity inherent in Web sites.

6.4 Relationship

In the Researcher’s opinion, creating relationships is the key for those who may be interested in giving back civically. “The New Public Service seeks to encourage more and more people to fulfill their responsibilities as citizens and for government to be especially sensitive to the voices of citizens" (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000, p. 555). Leisure can be used as an area where interest in civic responsibility can easily be ignited. It is believed here, that not only an education on government or political involvement can indicate one's investment in civic responsibility but also one's public leisure participation. Leisure should be seen as an area where a recognition and introduction of government and government policy can occur and should be investigated further to see these links more firmly. Denhardt and Denhardt believe that through involvement in all types of civic programs, all parties can work together to create opportunity for participation, collaboration and community. Citizen participation, as Arnstein (1969) indicated is giving people power and means by "which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society" (p. 16).

6.4.1 The New Public Service

Denhardt and Denhardt (2001) recognize that technology has made possible greater access to public policies. Online customization pages and discussion groups are a great way for PLSA to create a space for dialog and to articulate shared values concerning public policies. Central to establishing a relationship is the requirement of a public dialog and deliberation (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000). Control should give way to interaction and involvement. In this study, however, more evidence was provided for administrators having control over programs and services than the participants or citizens. The following two section, Engagement and Accessibility, indicate that evidence from the studied sites suggested administers are trying harder to enhance the agency than the community. This is likely due to top down demands. Leisure officials often have felt pressured to generate more revenue and become a more self-sustaining department. Officials have been required to justify that these services were needed, which they sought to do by increasing the number of participants. Recently, however, it has been noted that government is becoming increasingly more open and participative. The role of the public official will be that of a "conciliating, mediating or even a adjudicating" one and will require new skills, of "brokering, negotiating and conflict resolution" to serve rather than steer (Denhardt and Denhardt, p.554). Implementing the Internet as part of communication efforts allows PLSA to easily adopt aspects of the serving role. This role should continue to increase with these agencies in the future.

6.4.1.1 Engagement

Through a collaborative process citizen empowerment and enhancement of life conditions should a central goal. Public officials need to listen to the community and, based on what the community identifies, provide the necessary resources to do so as best they can. Very little evidence was found for citizen empowerment within the studied Web pages. Opportunities for citizen involvement in program design and implementation were rather scarce, considering how easily it would be to create and communicate such opportunities to exist. Employing a community development frame of mind, Pedlar (1996) believed that education is a key element for empowerment, "teaching and facilitating on the part of the community development worker, and learning and doing for oneself on the part of the individual or community" can occur (p. 14). Practitioners must not only use agencies' capabilities to assist in the enhancement but must mobilize existing resources and assets already present in the community.

6.4.1.2 Accessibility

Limited access to information can be an economic and social disadvantage and has been referred to as the *digital divide.* Whether it is decreasing or not, the inevitable digital divide places those without access to the Internet at a disadvantage. There is a need to look further into the digital divide. Public Web marketers should ask, “Is there helpful information explaining how to choose the right programs and services for individuals with different needs?” And, “Are there efforts online to communicate “accessibility for all” programs?”

Although some evidence was found in the Web pages for establishing a wide array of user opportunities involving programs and services, “accessibility for all” needs to be a greater focus. Not only for those individuals who are limited economically but for other individuals as well. For example, individuals with lower educational levels, low self-confidence or those who may be at a disadvantage due to where they live geographically.

Accessibility options were not communicated strongly and often required an in-depth search of the entire Web site to find if they were communicated online at all. Despite the fact that many people who may be in the greatest need of accessibility and subsidy programs are generally those without regular Internet assess, these programs need to be communicated more efficiently. For those people who are unfamiliar with the Internet there is an even greater need to have accessibility options placed in an area easy to navigate to from a home page.

6.5 Marketing

For the purpose of this study a general marketing process was utilized. The rationale behind utilizing a marketing perspective was to provide a reference for the analysis procedure. The marketing process is somewhat generic across all forms of marketing, from pure to social, consisting primarily of: market research and planning, segmentation, the marketing mix, implementation and evaluation. It is only recent that marketing initiatives have been introduced into public leisure service (Johnson Tew et al., 1999). If a marketing orientation is to be operational, attention to the entire marketing process must take place (McCarville, 1999). This may be somewhat difficult for a community organization to undergo considering the resentment towards the idea of marketing and a fear of a rigid hierarchy taking over. However, what is being suggested is that if the citizen and community's well being are the goals of the organization, then all parts of an organization should be considering the citizen first and foremost. Focusing on the goal of the organization, which is exactly what Havitz (1988) stated 20 years ago, marketing is a set of "neutral tools" that can be used for assistance in achieving any goal, whether it is a goal of the public, humanistic viewpoint, or private capitalist commercial organizations. The idea behind the marketing perspective taken here is relationship building. Administrators should see citizens as citizens rather than clients or consumers and they should share control and trust in collaboration.

Social marketing is seen as a philosophy encompassing many techniques used to broaden and deepen current and prospective participants' involvement though strong relationships with an agency (Kaczynski, 2008). Participants hold the potential to maintain a connection to public services and possibly contribute in the future. According to the 2004 Canada Survey for Giving, Volunteering and Participating, the top reasons for volunteering were to contribute to community, offer skills and experiences, and being personally connected to the cause. It can be beneficial for community organizations, such as leisure services, to realize the contribution marketing practices can make in fostering long time users who are more likely than short time users to become volunteers and give back.

Although the market process may focus too much on identifying needs and problems, the idea of developing a strategy is key. It may, however, be one that is developed from the bottom up, one that comes from the citizens. In The New Public Service context, the community is encouraged to be involved in the process of identifying needs and developing a strategy. It is only after a community's assets and resources are uncovered that a true mission or strategies can be formed to seek further growth. One of the most valuable resources available to communities today, and in the future, is the Internet. As Kotler (2005) stated, "the Internet is a powerful set of tools that can be used in almost any industry and be a part of almost any strategy" (p.11). The following sections refer to research questions one and two.

6.5.1 Strategies and Goals

Although it is not entirely common, or necessary, for Web sites to present explicit evidence of specific marketing efforts, it is now clear that PLSA Web presence seldom portrays solid marketing communication efforts on their Web sites. However, it can not be concluded solely on the basis of this research, that this is the only means of communication these agencies use. In terms of marketing efforts, however, one could argue that Web sites are now the best and most accessible way to judge the conventional methods of marketing and communication by an outsider. The findings suggest a need to reconfigure PLSA online marketing communication activities. Several changes are needed when trying to adjust marketing strategies to the online environment. This may explain why the sites used in this study were judged as performing better at design and technology applications than they were at providing marketing evidence. Some of these sites may just need more synergy between the communication content and the technology applications they provide.

Very little evidence was obtained to suggest a specific marketing philosophy in most of the surveyed Web sites. However, a tempered or societal marketing philosophy, if any, was somewhat obvious. Like pure marketing, societal marketing focuses on satisfying the needs of the client, that have been imparted on the agency by the client (or more appropriately, imparted by the citizen), but aims to achieve this in a way that also maintains or improves individuals' and society's well being (Kotler et al., 2005). As a whole, the Web sites did not offer strong evidence of client or citizen input. For example, marketing research was almost never collected or shared via agencies' Web sites. The Internet is a great way to effectively capture data and learn more about the citizen in the community simply by making better use of online surveys or simply by presenting the option to easily leave feedback.

The first step in any marketing initiative should be one started with coordination and planning which will allow for a formation of a strategic path (McCarville, 1999). This allows agencies to develop carefully thought out goals and principles. Once goals have been set, the next stage in the planning process should be one centered on assessing opportunities. Considerable focus in this stage is given to assessing a providers' capabilities. McCarville indicates that this is a time to review situational factors, such as current programs and resources, as well as determining outside partnerships that may be beneficial to fulfilling community needs. Based on these assessments strategies can be developed; a “blueprint” for action, which will include issues like scheduling, financing and resource allocation. In this stage, the purpose is to develop an overall mission which should reflect the organization's values (Kotler et al., 2005). In a leisure context, principles may include convenience, value, safety, opportunity, choice, and satisfaction (McCarville).

Surprisingly, within the Web presence of PLSA, almost no evidence was found for mission statements or objectives. Often times, a mission statement was present on the municipality's home page but not throughout the rest of the site. Furthermore, any missions or goals related directly to the Recreation or Leisure Department were even scarcer. The online presence of these leisure agencies does not indicate a strong, long or short term, planning focus. This is not to say that they do not carry out planning efforts, however, they are just not communicated online. The benefits of opening some of the internal activities, like planning, to the greater public via the Internet can be positive. As long as the information about internal activity is easy to get to, simple in content and the option to provide input is available, an open and shared space can be created. Often times, there were links to master plans or downtown development plans, but they were always in a PDF format and consisted of numerous pages with bureaucratic proposal information. It may be beneficial to communicate separately, in a straightforward message, any planning information on Recreation and Leisure Departments specific pages.

6.5.2 Marketing Segmentation

Once strategies and a mission are in place, potential client groups are developed based on the marketing practice of segmentation, identified from the broader population of citizens. The marketing process works in a sequence. As was identified in research question one, no specific strategy was evident, therefore, it is not surprising that no clear segmentation was evident online. Without a strong strategy it is hard to determine target markets. Very little evidence was found for marketing segmentation on the Web sites in this study. This could for some, be seen as a positive. Segmentation often gives the impression of a society shaped by, "liberalism, individualism, and the ideology of the market" (Pedlar, 1996, p. 11). There is a fear that segmentation will further the problems of society by ignoring disadvantaged individuals. Havitz (1988) stated that thoughtfully conceived public sector marketing is far from ignoring the problems of marginalization and the underprivileged, in fact, is a central focus. Crompton and Lamb (1986) argued that disenfranchised society should be a major concern for public sector marketers. Their efforts may revolve around exploring techniques to increase participation of underprivileged people, developing methods to stimulate leisure development in economically depressed areas, and coming up with methods of influencing the perception of the benefits of leisure. Furthermore, disadvantaged groups can be defined in a number of ways. Consideration of a wide variety of variables will not only help to offer specific segments but also to give focus to accessibility programs. As stated earlier, “accessibility for all” issues need to be communicated stronger though PLSA Web site. Variables to consider could be: (1) Demographic, income, education and ethnicity (2) Behavioural, sedentary versus active lifestyles and current and past participation levels (3) Psychographics, personalities and self-esteem levels (4) Geographic, rural versus urban, community and neighbourhood size. However, Web site content did not amplify segmentation very well. Consistent with Johnson Tew et al’s. (1999) conclusions, all of the sites showed the same typical demographic and life stage groups were nearly always characterized by age: senior, adult, youth, child or mother with infant. Also consistent with Johnson Tew et al., it was rarely found that more than one variable was used to describe a specific group. In these rare cases, the other variable used was often a behavioural variable related to skill level.

Undoubtedly, within any community, identifiable segments will be visible. If The New Public Service approach is used, specific groups within a community will eventually be identified. Based on a collaborative process both the citizen and the agency will be able to identify recognizable groups within the community. Resources have to be allocated accordingly (McCarville, 2002) it is not beneficial to waste resources on an entire community when some may not be needed in certain areas. Providers that do segment are shown to spend less on promotional means for their programs (Johnson Tew et al., 1999). Putnam (1993) believes that it is possible to come to an agreement stating, “we ought to be able to design programs that creatively combine individual choice with collective engagement” (p. 156).

6.5.3 Marketing Mix

When developing programs and services for public leisure, issues of equity are always a concern (Crompton & Lamb, 1986). The need to design programs that can reach the greatest number of community members is extremely challenging. Extensive consideration at this stage should go into pricing, place of distribution and promotion. Along with product development, pricing, place and promotion make up the traditional marketing mix, which represents the tactical application of basic marketing principles (McCarville, 1999). Carefully planned applications of these elements are required for the provision of public leisure services, and will require even more attention when used in a “public good” objective.

As expected, due to the previous results of research question one, the online evidence of carefully planned marketing mix elements was also very weak. Evidence for the element of Product was found to be the strongest among the Ps, however, very little was provided for Product evidence on these sites. McCarville (2002) explained the importance of program names, stating that a carefully thought out name is one of the most important elements used in successful communication practices. Service and program names are often associated with the Product element and should be creativity designed to include service benefits. Yet, more than half of the names found on the studied Web pages did not communicate additional benefits. The service name is also a great way to communicate new upcoming services and should be given much thought ensuring that it is easy to remember and pronounce.

Service quality aspects are also often taken into consideration at the Product stage. Citizens and clients will want to look for clues to judge the quality of a service, particularly physical evidence. The capabilities within a Web site to present physical evidence is extremely easy, therefore, it was expected that this would be easy to identify. Although many Web pages did contain information on facilities, the opportunity to offer many more clues was wasted, as the sites only offer little evidence. Any evidence concerning other dimensions of service quality was also found to be rather scarce. Empathy, reliability, assurance and expert personnel were challenging to identify within the Web pages. Expert personnel may not be a distinct dimension of service quality determined by Parasuraman et al. (1988), yet providers and staff members are the ones who are creating and making possible all the other dimensions. Again, an opportunity was over looked to provide clues on personnel. Web sites could have included information on the employee of the month or of agency members holding special awards or certificates. Furthermore, pictures are an excellent way to convey dimensions of quality as are visual tours and testimonials from previous participants.

Evidence of the Place factor was found to be even more of a challenge to identify. Overall, it was undetermined which type of equity model PLSA are using in terms of how their services are delivered. Within the distribution element, opportunities for strong information concerning convenience and access to program and services were not taken advantaged of. Surprisingly evidence concerning location and availability of programs was also very weak. It is important for PLSA to consider communicating additional information related to Place, such as the presence of multiple service offerings, directions, transit routes, safety issues, disability access to the facilities and parking for both cars and bikes.

The low evidence of the marketing mix elements should be somewhat consistent considering that the mix elements are best when used in coordination with each other. However, unexpectedly, the Price component showed the least amount of evidence. McCarville (2002) noted that service goods are often judged by price, yet nearly no evidence of price was found within the studied Web pages. This may be due to the way content was collected. Perhaps the content questions were not specific enough when it came to examining price. Without an explicit price, indicating a specific pricing strategy was difficult. Determining if subsidy cost options were given was also found to be difficult due to the lack or price. Again, the lack of price may be due to the content questions. If users where to proceed further through the site (e.g., online registration) prices are most likely very obvious. However, offering price upfront may be beneficial in the future seeing how so much can be determined from the price of a service. However, in the public sector prices are often determined based on a number of different criteria. Many times, costs are covered when funding comes from taxes and revenues generated by tax supported enterprises. Some of the public sector costs are also covered as gifts and grants from the private sector (Searle & Brayley, 2000). The amount of tax money required to develop and operate recreation and leisure facilities, can reduced charges and user fees for programs and services (Searle & Brayley) which for the majority of offerings are the case. Therefore, for those online users who are interested, it may be beneficial to indicate what exactly they are covering with their user fee and what the agency's funding is covering. This may also be seen as a convenience for those who would otherwise have to call the agency for pricing information.

Explicit evidence that Promotion was seen as a cost or an investment was rare, which to some extent may indicate that promotion is seen as a cost and little is done to enhance it. It was difficult to determine if promotional resources where allocated to specific programs over others on Web sites because each page is usually designed around a specific area. "Public leisure service agencies must stop viewing promotion (i.e., communication efforts) as a cost and start viewing it as an investment. Only when we consider and use the full range of communication opportunities, will citizens become more fully informed of our programs and opportunities" (Johnson Tew & Havitz, 2002, p. 93). Nonetheless, it was clear that programs such as aquatics and children's activities were giving more Web space, yet the same type of messaging was used for all. A promotion strategy was also unclear. In terms of Promotion, packages designed for intended client groups were not overly evident. The messages did not address the intended client group as well as they could have nor did they explicitly address wants of specific targeted audiences.

6.5.3.1 Promotion mix

It is not clear from PLAS'sWeb pages what type of promotional and communication elements are being utilized. It is clear, however, that in order to form solid relationships with communities other forms of promotion are needed, such as, public media, events or one-on-one communication. It may be beneficial for PLSA Web sites to include more evidence of promotional mix factors. It is currently determined that evidence of the promotion mix was extremely weak. Often a reference to a leisure brochure was evident but other media is needed, such as any televisions or radio spots that could be streamed online. As well, links to local newspaper and magazines that communicated information on the PLSA. It is also important that a one to one dialog can be created though links to staff email addresses, phone numbers or links to frequently asked questions. It is equally important that the offline communication include information, and an address, to the Web site. Researchers have found that online users learn about Web sites in many different ways: “through word of mouth, via traditional advertising, and through other types of online means” (Wang & Fesenmaier 2006, p.248). PLSA should try and encourage citizens to visit their Web site through other forms of communication. “Users are more likely to solidify relationships with organizations when they have multiple points of contact” (Hallahan, 2003, p. 15).

People was the last P examined, and it too was found to have very little evidence. People can be described as the interpersonal dynamic essential for service exchange which highlights the interaction between the deliverer and the user (McCarville, 2002). Those who are offering the service are a huge part of the overall package. Staff and volunteers have the ability to make or break a program and are a big deciding factor to potential users. It is critical to any quality program to have the right people delivering the service. Having the right people will help flourish any service. This notion of inseparability between service provider and client can place the same emphasis on the other users. Not only is it critical to have the right people delivering the service, a client is required to create a service; clients are co-producers (McCarville, 2002). The role of the participant is equally important. Here it is important for PLAS Web sites to include information on staff as well as information pertaining to users of the program. Visual evidence can be seen as an effective way to communicate with people, simply by including photos.

6.5.4 Communication Objectives

When examining communication objectives, it became clear that messages used to inform were quite prominent within PLSA Web sites. As people seek information, there are an abundance of opportunities to capture their attention and further expand their learning. When someone is searching for a service program, for example, it may be beneficial to have links and information on new programs that are in development and to ask for suggestions and input. All throughout the Web site, opportunities lie to facilitate engagement with individuals. However, messages must be constructed in a way that fits the objective of the communication and should be considered in relation to the stage the service is in.

In 1998, Janal believed that to be successful online it is better to provide reams of information as opposed to persuasion. According to Kotler et al. (2005) Web sites have become incredibly important for decision making. Recent studies have shown that consumers are accessing information on the Internet before making major life decisions, meaning they may want lots of information. Given that only a small amount of messages are received it may be more effective to keep things simple and clear. Evidence was provided for messages that were clear, basic and simple, indicating that informational content was adequately communicated within PLSA Web sites more so than any other objective. When creating key messages, Kotler et al, suggested attention should be given to simplicity. Short messages are not necessarily a bad thing. However, within a short message it may be more difficult to include aspects of communication associated with the other three objectives, highlighting the need for creative messaging. Short messages are often best when they can include benefits and descriptions. Utilizing non-text messaging can assist with keeping text short and meeting objectives. Communicating benefits are most commonly found in messages used to educate.

Key to an effective educating objective is communicating the value of the main benefit or attractions which will help develop a better level of understanding for the receiver (Crompton & Lamb 1986). Unfortunately poor to very little evidence resulted for educating messages. Providing additional information such as program descriptions and design will help potential participants know what to expect, such as what to bring with them, what to wear, where to meet, frequently asked questions, etc.

Consistent with previous research, from Johnson Tew and Havitz (2002), persuasive elements were not explicitly found within PLSA Web sites. It was previously stated that the goal of using persuasive messaging it to change attitudes and behaviours. However, within the online environment, people do not want to receive broadcast advertising. Effective marketers follow the unwritten rules of netiquette, an honour system which emphasizes proper behaviour on the Web. These rules state that unsolicited marketing material is unappreciated. Permission-based marketing, getting the consumer’s consent before the marketer communicates with them (Kotler, 2005), is far more accepted. For the public sector, this means that permission is important and perhaps persuasive type messaging should only happen after the fact. If utilizing persuasion techniques, agencies must be careful, as users are now in charge of the communication. However, it could also be argued that the more persuasive elements in a message, the more likely the receiver will be able to overcome any barriers to participation. As long as persuasive elements are used to communicate value and offer additional benefits that are aligned with the goals of the organization, persuasive elements could help provide better communication for users. The more one can expect of a service, the more likely they are, not only to be satisfied, but also confident in starting something new. Expectations can also be associated with confidence levels and constraints to participation. The more information one has, the more likely they are to gain assurance in themselves and in the service. The key to designing effective Web sites is to create enough value to get consumers to come back (Kotler et al., 2005). Messages could be filled with words that create vivid images that help to create emotion and in turn add value and show benefits to specific groups.

6.6 Regional Differences

Although an overall conclusion was that these sites provided basic informational messaging, there were sites containing features and messages more sophisticated and advanced than others. Regional differences were noted between the four regions. The differences found, however, may not be entirely accurate considering the limited amount of sites from each region. Also, there were no cities included in the sample frame from NF, NB, MB, or SK as they did not meet the population criteria. This means that this study did not get a good look at the maritime or prairie provinces.

Furthermore, only one municipality was used to represent Quebec. Initially, any municipalities drawn from Quebec were to be placed in the Central region. Quebec is often recognized as the most distinctive, although not the only, French-speaking society in Canada, in terms of social, cultural, historical and geographic qualities (Morden & Stebbins 1999). Quebec has been an enduring component of a larger Canadian society compared to the other Anglo societies in Canada. This province represents their own linguistic lifestyle and has reached a level of "institutional competence", due in part to protective policies and practices from government (Dimanche, 1994). These policies have shaped the context for leisure engagement. Therefore, it was decided to separate Drummondville QB into its own region.

According to Dimanche (1994), there is a lack of literature showing cross-cultural research, especially in marketing research. He stated that, "conducting research in intercultural and international settings leads to obvious problems related to cultural and language differences" (p. 124). One should be extremely cautious about cultural meaning differentials and the use of primarily language spoken by these populations. Dimanche argued that often English words and phrases have different meanings according to other cultural groups. A first language French Canadian assisted with the translation of the Drummondville QB site to minimize any problems associated with language barriers.

The results of this study indicated only a few notable differences which stood out for the Quebec region. Client Input and Overall Planning were both found to be strongest in Quebec while Administrative Control was found to be lowest. Throughout the Drummondville collection, both the Researcher and translator noted the strong emphasis that the city placed on volunteers, particularly with sport provision. Those who volunteer in Drummondville may be encouraged in a way that very much allows them to assert control over their leisure, more so perhaps then other municipalities. Within the limited research that does highlight Quebec's leisure, it seems that the majority of services are the same and that municipal government assumes primary responsibility over leisure services. What did appear to be slightly different was the strong connection to the arts, theatre, musical groups, dance troupes, writers' groups, and craft groups. One purpose for doing cross-cultural research is to explore other cultures, learn about them, and to test cultural difference (Dimanche, 1994). An interesting observation during data collection revealed that only one Web site, out of the ten, had language options. The City of Cornwall provided users with an option between English and French on their municipal home page. Yet, this was the only site with more than one language option. Further research into cultural communication differences in Canada is encouraged, with a sample more appropriately suited to acknowledge Canadian cultural diversities.

Nevertheless, it was concluded that those sites representing the Western region tended to take better advantage of Web technologies. According to Wang and Fesenmaier (2006), "the size, innovativeness, and support for technology within the organization determine to a large extent the nature of and effectiveness in the use of IT" (p.239). Strictly by looking at municipal population size (Appendix C) does not lend much evidence for why the Western region indicated slightly stronger results. The municipalities used from Central Canada have very similar population sizes to those found in the West. Wang and Fesenmaier also indicated that a firm's financial capabilities (which are often associated with size) can also determine technological adaptation. Financial capability is often a determining factor for developing and launching effective online communication. It is possible that the Western municipalities have the greatest financial resources. However, it is suggested that an examination of operating budgets is needed to compare these results. It may also be beneficial to investigate the number of employees within each municipality. Finally, organizational innovativeness was given as a reason for strong Web technology (Wang & Fesenmaier 2006). Innovative firms are more willing to experiment with new things. It would be very interesting to take a further look into the internal workings of these organizations to assess the acceptance of a technological environment. More suggestions for further research are given but first a brief discussion on the delimitations and limitations of the study are provided along with implications for public leisure services.

6.7 Modified Model of Online Communication for PLSA

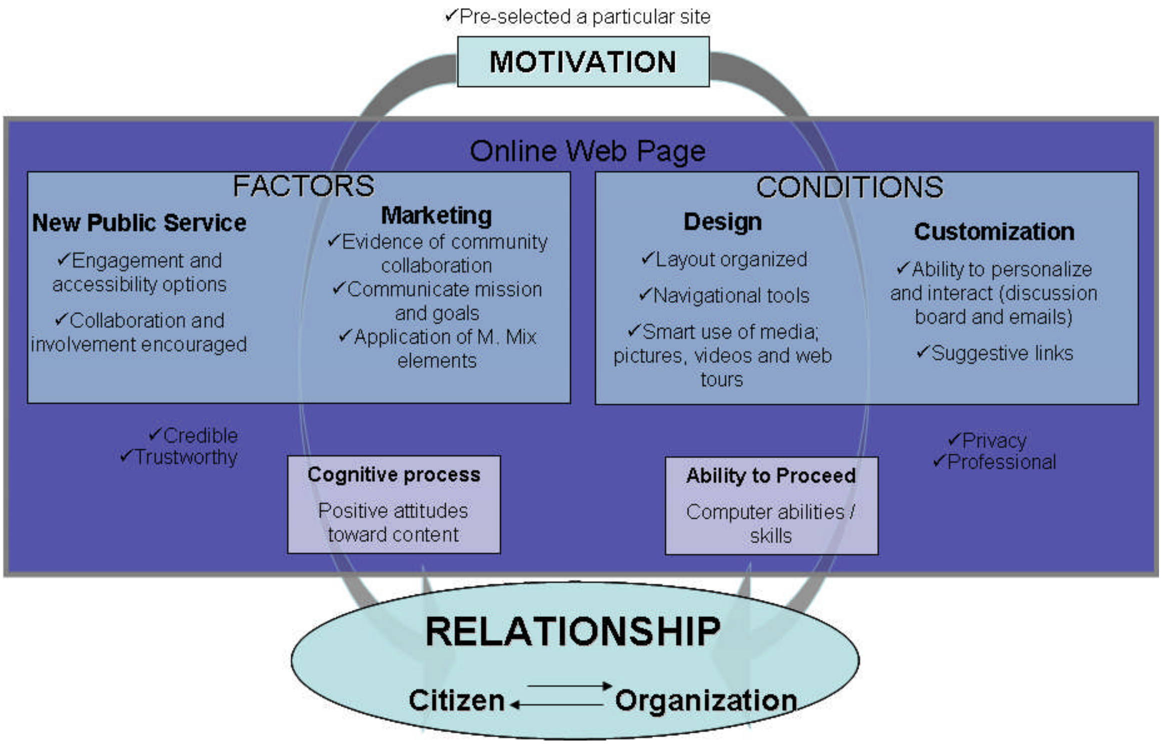
An assumption underlying this study is that attitudes do influence behaviour, and messages can have an effect on attitudes. It is important to remind the reader of the theoretical framework that guided this research. The theoretical framework used in this study assumed that messages can affect receivers. Messages constructed in a way that is aligned with the receiver's abilities and cognitive processes will generally result in a greater affect on persuasion. This is based on The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion (ELM), developed in 1981 by Petty and Cacioppo. The rationale behind utilizing the ELM is that when the means of communication is a Web site, people willingly come to Web sites for information. Therefore, most receivers are already motivated and invested to think about the message. The receiver is already attentive to the message and is far more likely to be responsive to persuasion affects.

Ironically, the ELM assumes a one-way communication process, yet this study emphasized that message learning or persuasion is more likely to be achieved if communication is two-way and interactive. Interestingly enough this study which was guided by a one-way model of communication, very much considered communication to be an interactive process. If a receiver has preselected a message, such as when choosing to go online and choosing to visit a particular Web site, their cognitive abilities and desire to process the messages are likely to be far greater than receivers who are controlled. In this light, a new modified model of PLSA Web communication is offered in Figure 28, which shows that instead of changing attitudes and behaviours, the drive behind communication is to create an open and sharing relationship, one that requires dialog between the agency and the citizen. With the use of the most basic Web features a relationship becomes even more attainable.

Persuasion theory has been the basis of many marketing endeavours. However, within many public marketing contexts it has been decided that for the optimum communication outcome the basis of leisure service communication should be re-focused, one where relationships are the bottom line. Not to say that persuasion does not have a place in leisure services; aspects of message construction can be learned from persuasive messages. Ajzen (1992) stated that the major purpose of persuasion theory is to identify the factors and conditions that produce acceptance of information. Knowing the factors and conditions that allow for the acceptance of information is key in the new model, except now the acceptance of information is used to form relationships. While discussing Web sites as tools for building organization-public relations, Hallahan (2003) recognized that online communication is not merely a means to an end (i.e., a tool for the transmission of content) but an end in itself that cements relationships.

It has been determined that PLSA Web communication should not be a focus on changing attitudes and behaviours but a focus on creating relationships. Where control over one's attitude and behaviours are left up to the receiver, they are in control by a simple click of a mouse. Now, as shown in the new model below, motivation occurs before the presentation of the message. Figure 28 illustrates that once presented with the pre-selected message both factors and conditions need to be positively aligned with receivers' cognitive processes and abilities to proceed, to form a relationship. In this particular case, factors concern the content of the message, while conditions concern the features within the Web site. If receivers interpret the factors as being credible and trustworthy, they are more likely able to have a positive cognitive response. Likewise, if receivers believe that the site is professional and their privacy is secure, they are more likely to progress through more of the Web site as long as their abilities and technical operations allow. If a receiver is able to move through the site with a high level of satisfaction, a relationship will only be maintained if the organization encourages reciprocity. Communication needs to be exchanged mutually, both from the citizen to the organization as well as from the organization to the citizen. It is recommended that PLSA consider these factors and conditions when designing communication online.

Figure 29. Modified Online Communication Model for PLSA



Although it has not seemed to work in the past, marketing may now be better suited to help PLSA due to the Internet. An examination questioning if online marketing practices can help enhance community is of particular interest. Is it possible for online marketing practices to help with creating public leisure services with an agenda for a better community? Furthermore, can The New Public Service, design and customization variables help with creating relationship? It would be interesting to investigate which factor and/or condition is most beneficial in creating relationship. In other words, can the new model presented here be supported?

6.8 Recommendation for Future Research

Although recommendations have been suggested prior, additional possibilities for research are offered here. Based on the results of this research, a variety of avenues are now open for investigation, the Researcher offers a few other areas of particular interest but encourages all to be explored.

Firstly, there is a need to establish the key determinants of PLSA Web sites from a user's perspective. It may be interesting to conduct a study on the way users navigate Web sites, including an evaluation of the site itself for navigational features. Here one could examine exactly what it is that users are doing on PLSA Web pages, and how they like to find their desired information. Uncovering specifics on what it is that users are wanting from these sites will undoubtedly be a necessary step in developing PLSA Web communication further. Such data can help improve design aspects of the site as well. In addition, questioning users about their Web encounter may also help capture levels of fulfillment and privacy, which could not be examined in this study. When considering users' perspective, other methods of research are encouraged, especially those with a qualitative, indicative process.

Secondly, a closer look into the actual implementation and planning process behind some of these Web sites, to provide an insider's perspective, is also extremely important.

Becoming more familiar with the agencies will help to validate some of the findings here as they are relatively one-sided.

6.9 Delimitation and Limitations

As with any research, the study discussed in this paper is not without its share of limitations and a finite scope. Limitations are often imposed by time, human resources, and budget constraints. Although access is free, only ten Web sites were selected because at the current time of collection it was still unknown how long each site would take to analyze. The ten Web sites that did make up the sample provided enough rich data to conduct the analysis.

One of the most apparent limitations in this study was the application of content analysis to the Internet. McMilan (2000) recognized that the rapid growth and change of Web-based content presents some unique challenges for researchers analyzing the content. The flexible nature of Web site material leads the results to be conditional to the time at which the site was being analyzed. To keep this impact to a minimum, the time of each content unit was carefully recoded as well as printed and no interruptions occurred during the collection of pages for any one site.

A strength of using content analysis is that it allows for conclusions to be drawn from content without having to gain access to the communicators of the Web site, who may be unable to be examined directly. There was only one coder for all of the Web sites, who was the Principal Researcher. However, there was a translator who assisted with the French site, Drummondville. The translator also acted as a reliability guide when assessing the

Drummondville site. There was another reliability check conducted at the beginning of the analysis to ensure a consistent agreement level for the items in the instrument.
However, an obvious limitation to this study was the fact that no inside members (i.e. marketers or practitioners) of the PLSA were asked about their Web site's communication efforts. This was acceptable because a logical follow up study could compare the results found here to input of citizens, users and inside members.

Although the research design was supported by the Researcher, the process of content analysis is a recursive one. Riffe et al. (2005) encourage researchers to continually refine the research design according to the situation by constantly referring back to the purpose and theory behind the study. Modifications to the research design were made as the study evolved. During the process of collecting the data a research journal was used to note any needed changes to items, which helped to ensure that for those items that were changed data were appropriately collected.

The journal was also used to record the reasons for scores given to individual items, which helped act as a reference guide as the collection process continued. It was easy for the Researcher to compare results of items to that of an earlier item. Initially, redundancy was a concern for the Researcher. A number of items revolved around the same variables but were asked in a different way. This was because the variables related to two or more bigger concepts and appeared more than once in the coding sheet. It was determined that some of the items could have been grouped together better. There was redundancy with a number of the items and if the instrument was constructed a second time, it could be mapped out more efficiently. It may have been beneficial to just keep the items worded the same and use the one item for all the concepts. However, utilizing similar items did allow for internal reliability checks.

Many of the existing instruments and surveys used for Web site evaluations try to be broad in terms of the types of electronic communication the instrument can assess. However, the instrument created for the current study was designed specifically for assessing leisure in public services, a very small niche in the world of Web sites, let alone electronic communication. With items pertaining directly to social marking and The New Public Service, it is expected that a measurement tool such as this would be far more beneficial to public services than for private organizations.

Another limitation was the category of Web site that PLSA fall under. These sites are not particularly ideal for evaluation based on e-SQ, simply because of the emphasis e-SQ places on e-commerce. Through the adaptation of the e-SQ scale, and the refining of many of the dimensions, there may have been a loss of conceptual meaning. Perhaps the definition of quality needs to be re-focused to attend to some of the issues involving non-profit, public Web sites. Quality is best measured as an outcome, where this study did not have respondents arriving at a final outcome.

The weak results found in this study may be due to the adoption of questions designed for a marketing audit. Taking a traditional marketing approach to analyze the Web site content may have been a weakness of this study. Perhaps using items geared more towards a new model of marketing would be more appropriate when studying Web sites.

Wang, Hwang and Fesenmaier (2006) recognized that new marketing concepts and paradigms which take advantage of Internet capabilities have to be developed. However, utilizing a marketing process to determine evidence of communication was seen as an adequate starting point for an understanding into the Web presence of PLSA.

6.10 Implication for Public Leisure Service Agencies

Data would suggest that there is a general understanding for the need of Web sites within PLSA although the full potential of the Internet has not been embraced. PLSA require information regarding the current state of Web site technology as well as new developing trends. At an organizational level there are many factors that can hamper or promote the effective implementation of Web-based marketing. This is common for most technologies being introduced or re-established. Congruent with Wang et al. (2006) it is believed that an organizational capacity for technology will have a great effect on Web communication. The management support towards the adoption or improvements of a Web site or, the level of Internet literacy within the organization, can have a huge impact on the success of Web communication. There is a strong need for management support, as well as employee involvement and training opportunities regarding new projects. The technology adapted has to be integrated into the routine business practices of the organization. Wang et al. recognized that organizational structure and culture, creative thinking, flexibility, and the ability to change and adapt quickly may help in adjusting to a new means of communication.

Although development of programs and services are difficult and pose challenges for public leisure practitioners, some of the problems may be alleviated when reflecting on the role of The New Public Service. It should also be remembered that citizens are an equally important part in the improvement and development of Web sites. Agencies will benefit from offering Citizens training sessions, as well as, encouraging them to get involved in decision making regarding online communication.

Utilizing the steps in the marketing process to accompany the values and objectives of the agency may help in successfully developing online communications for PLSA. Web sites and the accompanying communication strategy should be developed only after the agency is ready and able to efficiently operate and support the site. This calls for strong market research and planning. “A site promotional plan should identify a set of specific actions that will inform a majority of the target audience that the Web site exists and is worth their time to visit” (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2006, p. 241). Furthermore, a redefinition of organizational concepts and goals may even be required to maximize the potential of the Internet or, to a lesser degree a redefinition of communicational goals.

6.11 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, it is clear that the design and navigational features on PLSA Web sites are well executed. However, from the current state of PLSA Web sites it is still unclear what type of marketing communication efforts are being put forth. In the future it is hoped that this may become clearer with the adoption of online marketing communication strategies. Marketing strategies should be designed to form relationships with citizens. Whether we choose to call it marketing or not, the utilization of online communication needs to be carefully constructed and backed by values grounded in the "social good". Like other technologies in the past, the Internet has changed the way people think of convenience, speed and information gathering processes. Using online communication to execute the core mission of an agency poses a great opportunity for PLSA to form relationships with citizens. With the use of online communication message learning and interaction is more possible than ever.

Almost 20 years ago, Havitz (1988) stated that, "we in the public sector have little to gain by totally cutting ties with the commercial-sector", this is still an important message today. Utilizing and fully understanding online marketing concepts while acting under a community frame of mind may help provide avenues for better leisure services, and create forms of public good which better fit with today's communities. Online communication will play a pivotal role in the communication necessary to from significant relationships between leisure services and the community.

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Appendix A
The Population of Urban Areas in Canada

Statistics Canada. (2006a). *Cumulative Profile,2006.* Census of Population (Provinces, Census Divisions, Municipalities) (database), Using E-STAT (distributor).

City	Population
Abbotsford (B.C.) CMA/RMR	159,020
Alma (Que.) CA/AR	32,603
Amos (Que.) CA/AR	17,918
Baie-Comeau (Que.) CA/AR	29,808
Barrie (Ont.) CMA/RMR	177,061
Bathurst (N.B.) CA/AR	31,424
Bay Roberts (N.L.) CA/AR	10,507
Belleville (Ont.) CA/AR	91,518
Brandon (Man.) CA/AR	48,256
Brantford (Ont.) CMA/RMR	124,607
Brockville (Ont.) CA/AR	39,668
Brooks (Alta.) CA/AR	22,452
Calgary (Alta.) CMA/RMR	1,079,310
Campbell River (B.C.) CA/AR	36,461
Campbellton (N.B./Que.) CA/AR	17,888
Camrose (Alta.) CA/AR	15,620
Canmore (Alta.) CA/AR	12,039
Cape Breton (N.S.) CA/AR	105,928
Centre Wellington (Ont.) CA/AR	26,049
Charlottetown (P.E.I.) CA/AR	58,625
Chatham-Kent (Ont.) CA/AR	108,589
Chilliwack (B.C.) CA/AR	80,892
Cobourg (Ont.) CA/AR	18,210
Cold Lake (Alta.) CA/AR	11,991
Collingwood (Ont.) CA/AR	17,290
Corner Brook (N.L.) CA/AR	26,623
Cornwall (Ont.) CA/AR	58,485
Courtenay (B.C.) CA/AR	49,214
Cowansville (Que.) CA/AR	12,666
Cranbrook (B.C.) CA/AR	24,138
Dawson Creek (B.C.) CA/AR	10,994
Dolbeau-Mistassini (Que.) CA/AR	14,546
Drummondville (Que.) CA/AR	78,108
Duncan (B.C.) CA/AR	41,387
Edmonton (Alta.) CMA/RMR	1,034,945
Edmundston (N.B.) CA/AR	21,442
Elliot Lake (Ont.) CA/AR	11,549
Estevan (Sask.) CA/AR	11,135
Fort St. John (B.C.) CA/AR	25,136
Fredericton (N.B.) CA/AR	85,688
Granby (Que.) CA/AR	68,352
Grand Falls-Windsor (N.L.) CA/AR	13,558
Grande Prairie (Alta.) CA/AR	71,868
Greater Sudbury / Grand Sudbury (Ont.) CMA/RMR	158,258
Guelph (Ont.) CMA/RMR	127,009
Halifax (N.S.)	372,858

CMA/RMR	
Hamilton (Ont.) CMA/RMR	692,911
Hawkesbury (Ont./Que.) CA/AR	12,267
Ingersoll (Ont.) CA/AR	11,760
Joliette (Que.) CA/AR	43,595
Kamloops (B.C.) CA/AR	92,882
Kawartha Lakes (Ont.) CA/AR	74,561
Kelowna (B.C.) CMA/RMR	162,276
Kenora (Ont.) CA/AR	15,177
Kentville (N.S.) CA/AR	25,969
Kingston (Ont.) CMA/RMR	152,358
Kitchener (Ont.) CMA/RMR	451,235
Kitimat (B.C.) CA/AR	8,987
La Tuque (Que.) CA/AR	15,293
Lachute (Que.) CA/AR	11,832
Leamington (Ont.) CA/AR	49,741
Lethbridge (Alta.) CA/AR	95,196
Lloydminster (Alta./Sask.) CA/AR	27,023
London (Ont.) CMA/RMR	457,720
Matane (Que.) CA/AR	16,438
Medicine Hat (Alta.) CA/AR	68,822
Midland (Ont.) CA/AR	35,402
Miramichi (N.B.) CA/AR	24,737
Moncton (N.B.) CMA/RMR	126,424
Montréal (Que.)	3,635,571
CMA/RMR	
Moose Jaw (Sask.) CA/AR	33,360
Nanaimo (B.C.) CA/AR	92,361
New Glasgow (N.S.) CA/AR	36,288
Norfolk (Ont.) CA/AR	62,563
North Battleford (Sask.) CA/AR	17,765
North Bay (Ont.) CA/AR	63,424
Okotoks (Alta.) CA/AR	17,145
Orillia (Ont.) CA/AR	40,532
Oshawa (Ont.) CMA/RMR	330,594
Ottawa - Gatineau (Ont./Que.) CMA/RMR	1,130,761
Owen Sound (Ont.) CA/AR	32,259
Parksville (B.C.) CA/AR	26,518
Pembroke (Ont.) CA/AR	23,195
Penticton (B.C.) CA/AR	43,313
Petawawa (Ont.) CA/AR	14,651
Peterborough (Ont.) CMA/RMR	116,570
Port Alberni (B.C.) CA/AR	25,297
Port Hope (Ont.) CA/AR	16,390
Portage la Prairie (Man.) CA/AR	20,494
Powell River (B.C.) CA/AR	16,537
Prince Albert (Sask.) CA/AR	40,766
Prince George (B.C.) CA/AR	83,225
Prince Rupert (B.C.) CA/AR	13,392
Quesnel (B.C.) CA/AR	22,449
Québec (Que.) CMA/RMR	715,515
Red Deer (Alta.)	82,772

CA/AR	
Regina (Sask.) CMA/RMR	194,971
Rimouski (Que.) CA/AR	46,807
Rivière-du-Loup (Que.) CA/AR	24,570
Rouyn-Noranda (Que.) CA/AR	39,924
Saguenay (Que.) CMA/RMR	151,643
Saint John (N.B.) CMA/RMR	122,389
Saint-Georges (Que.) CA/AR	31,364
Saint-Hyacinthe (Que.) CA/AR	55,823
Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu (Que.) CA/AR	87,492
Salaberry-de-Valleyfield (Que.) CA/AR	39,672
Salmon Arm (B.C.) CA/AR	16,205
Sarnia (Ont.) CA/AR	88,793
Saskatoon (Sask.) CMA/RMR	233,923
Sault Ste. Marie (Ont.) CA/AR	80,098
Sept-Îles (Que.) CA/AR	27,827
Shawinigan (Que.) CA/AR	56,434
Sherbrooke (Que.) CMA/RMR	186,952
Sorel-Tracy (Que.) CA/AR	48,295
Squamish (B.C.) CA/AR	15,256
St. Catharines - Niagara (Ont.) CMA/RMR	390,317
St. John's (N.L.) CMA/RMR	181,113
Stratford (Ont.) CA/AR	30,461
Summerside (P.E.I.) CA/AR	16,153
Swift Current (Sask.) CA/AR	16,533
Temiskaming Shores (Ont.) CA/AR	12,904
Terrace (B.C.) CA/AR	18,581
Thetford Mines (Que.) CA/AR	26,107
Thompson (Man.) CA/AR	13,593
Thunder Bay (Ont.) CMA/RMR	122,907
Tillsonburg (Ont.) CA/AR	14,822
Timmins (Ont.) CA/AR	42,997
Toronto (Ont.) CMA/RMR	5,113,149
Trois-Rivières (Que.) CMA/RMR	141,529
Truro (N.S.) CA/AR	45,077
Val-d'Or (Que.) CA/AR	32,288
Vancouver (B.C.) CMA/RMR	2,116,581
Vernon (B.C.) CA/AR	55,418
Victoria (B.C.) CMA/RMR	330,088
Victoriaville (Que.) CA/AR	48,893
Wetaskiwin (Alta.) CA/AR	11,673
Whitehorse (Y.T.) CA/AR	22,898
Williams Lake (B.C.) CA/AR	18,760
Windsor (Ont.) CMA/RMR	323,342
Winnipeg (Man.) CMA/RMR	694,668
Wood Buffalo (Alta.) CA/AR	52,643
Woodstock (Ont.) CA/AR	35,480
Yellowknife (N.W.T.) CA/AR	18,700
Yorkton (Sask.) CA/AR	17,438

Appendix B
Urban Areas in Canada with Population of 49,999 -15,000

Statistics Canada. (2006a). *Cumulative Profile,2006.* Census of Population (Provinces, Census Divisions, Municipalities) (database), Using E-STAT (distributor).

City	Population
Belleville (Ont.) CA/AR	91,518
Brantford (Ont.) CMA/RMR	124,607
Cape Breton (N.S.) CA/AR	105,928
Charlottetown (P.E.I.) CA/AR	58,625
Chatham-Kent (Ont.) CA/AR	108,589
Chilliwack (B.C.) CA/AR	80,892
Cornwall (Ont.) CA/AR	58,485
Drummondville (Que.) CA/AR	78,108
Fredericton (N.B.) CA/AR	85,688
Granby (Que.) CA/AR	68,352
Grande Prairie (Alta.) CA/AR	71,868
Guelph (Ont.) CMA/RMR	127,009
Kamloops (B.C.) CA/AR	92,882
Kawartha Lakes (Ont.) CA/AR	74,561
Lethbridge (Alta.) CA/AR	95,196
Medicine Hat (Alta.) CA/AR	68,822
Moncton (N.B.) CMA/RMR	126,424
Nanaimo (B.C.) CA/AR	92,361
Norfolk (Ont.) CA/AR	62,563
North Bay (Ont.) CA/AR	63,424
Peterborough (Ont.) CMA/RMR	116,570
Prince George (B.C.) CA/AR	83,225
Red Deer (Alta.) CA/AR	82,772
Saint John (N.B.) CMA/RMR	122,389
Saint-Hyacinthe (Que.) CA/AR	55,823
Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu (Que.) CA/AR	87,492
Sarnia (Ont.) CA/AR	88,793
Sault Ste. Marie (Ont.) CA/AR	80,098
Shawinigan (Que.) CA/AR	56,434
Thunder Bay (Ont.) CMA/RMR	122,907
Trois-Rivières (Que.) CMA/RMR	141,529
Vernon (B.C.) CA/AR	55,418
Wood Buffalo (Alta.) CA/AR	52,643

Appendix C

Sample of Municipalities and Web Sites

Municipalities	Population	Department Name and Web site
Cape Breton NS	105,928	Recreation http://www.cbrm.ns.ca/portal/community/recreation/default.asp
Charlottetown PEI	58,625	Parks and Recreation http://www.city.charlottetown.pe.ca/residents/parks_recreation.cfm
Brantford ON	124,607	Leisure and Recreation http://www.brantford.ca/content/publishing.nsf/Content/Leisure
Chatham-Kent ON	108,589	Recreation and Tourism http://www.chatham-kent.ca/recreation+and+tourism/events+and+travel+guide/events+and+travel+guide.htm
Cornwall ON	58,485	Planning, Parks and Recreation http://www.cornwall.ca/main.cfm?PageName=Recreation&Parent=City%20Hall
Drummondville QC	78,108	Loisirs http://www.ville.drummondville.qc.ca/2006services/loisirs/mission.htm
Chilliwack BC	80,892	Parks, Recreation and Culture http://www.gov.chilliwack.bc.ca/main/page.cfm?id=285
Lethbridge AB	95,196	Leisure and Recreation Services http://www.lethbridge.ca/home/City+Hall/Departments/Leisure+and+Recreation+Services/default.htm
Sault Ste. Marie ON	80,098	Community Services http://www.city.sault-ste-marie.on.ca/Article_Page.aspx?ID=185&deptid=1
Prince George BC	83,225	Parks, Recreation and Culture http://www.city.pg.bc.ca/residents/

Appendix D

Coding Instrument

Online Communication and Public Leisure Services
Coding Instrument

City:
Population:
Date and time of coding:
Title of the homepage:
URL address of the homepage:

Content Question: # of pages:

No evidence provided	0
Very little evidence provided	1
Some evidence provided	2
Strong evidence provided	3
Explicit evidence provided	4

1.Content

Marketing Strategy

Is there evidence…	0	1	2	3	4
Marketing Philosophy					
1. of client input					
2. of clients needs					
3. of an obvious group that services are directed towards					
4. that benefits are particular to specific clientele					
5. that the agency knows their client groups					
6. that the organization defines itself by the benefits it offers to the client					
7. that the agency has an interest to the long term impact it has on society/community					
8. that the agency has an interest to the long term impact it has on the environment					
9. that the agency has an interest in its impact to non-users					
10. that the agency is first client focused and second community focused					
11. that the agency targets underprivileged people					
Goals					
12. of a mission statement					
13. of any objectives stated					
If so (strongly implied or explicit) are they….	yes	no			
clear					

	measurable					
	reasonable					
	within a time frame					
	benefit oriented					
14.	of long term goals					
15.	of short term goals					
16.	planning					
17.	of a link to general/strategic plan					
18.	that the agency is aware of their external social environment					
19.	that the agency is aware of their external economic environment					
20.	that the agency is aware of their external political environment					
21.	that the agency is aware of their external competition					
22.	that the agency is aware of current technology					
23.	that the agency is aware of their external ecological environment					
24.	that the agency has undergone a needs assessment					
25.	of a contact person who deals with communications					
26.	of new services					
27.	that the agency is getting rid of services that are not working					
28.	of resources concentrated to few services					
29.	showing what the agency has done to respond to feedback					
30.	of online registration					
31.	that non-users can become users					
	Language used to Identify users					
32.	that the agency is referring to clients					
33.	that the agency is referring to consumers					
34.	that the agency is referring to customers					
35.	that the agency is referring to citizens					
36.	that the agency is referring to participants					
37.	that the agency is referring to residents					
38.	that the agency is referring to visitors					

Market Segmentation

	Is there evidence…	0	1	2	3	4
	Target markets					
39.	that market groups have been chosen					
40.	that services are generic to the entire population					
41.	that two or more market segments have been chosen					
42.	of segmentation based on sociodemographics					
43.	of segmentation based on geographic restrictions					
44.	of segmentation based on behavioural characteristics					
45.	of specific benefits for each segment					

	0	1	2	3	4
46. that the agency serves population groups that may not be served by other agencies					
If yes, list here					
47. How many variables are used to describe market groups	0	1	2	3	4

Marketing Mix

Is there evidence…	0	1	2	3	4
Product					
48. that the service have a name that is easy to pronounce and remember					
49. that the service has a name					
50. that the name communicates the benefits of the service					
51. of the physical appearance of the facilities					
52. of picture or visual tours of the facilities					
53. that new upcoming services are communicated					
54. of expert personnel					
55. of assurance					
56. of empathy					
57. of reliability					
58. of responsiveness					
Place					
59. that locations are based around clients' convenience					
60. that scheduling is based around clients' convenience					
61. of directions					
62. of partnerships with other agencies or organizations in the commercial sector					
63. of partnerships with other agencies or organizations in the public sector					
64. of partnerships with other agencies or organizations in the private not-for-profit sector					
65. of a facilitative approach					
66. that there is parking for cars and bicycles					
67. of physical disabilities access to facilities					
68. of safety concerns					
69. that the agency is the direct provider of the service					
70. that the service goes to the client (outreach)					
71. of which equity model they use					
If so which one:	yes	no			
72. equal opportunity model					
73. compensatory model					
74. market model					
75. of multiple service offerings					
New Public Service					
76. that administrators have control over services					

77. that citizens have control over services					
78. that citizens are actively engaged in development and implementation of services (empowerment)					
79. that citizen are encouraged to be involved in the development and implementation of services					
80. that interaction is occurring between agency and citizen					
81. of citizen contribution					
82. that interest centers on the enhancement of the community					
83. that interest centers on the enhancement of the agency					
84. of accessibility being a priority					
Price					
85. that price is offered					
86. of online payment offered					
87. that prices are based around target groups abilities to pay					
88. that prices are based around target groups willingness to pay					
89. of subsidy options					
If so are they :	yes	no			
passive (client must seek out)					
pro-active (agency is open about its subsidy options)					
90. of cost based pricing					
91. of going–rate pricing					
92. of demand based pricing					
93. that there are opportunities for interested prospects to sample services at an introductory price					
94. that costs are reflective of non-monetary costs as well					
If yes which non-monetary costs	yes	no			
time					
embarrassment					
psychological effort					
Promotion					
95. of generic information based promotion					
96. of specific communication packages for targeted groups					
97. that the message is directed toward the intended client group					
98. that the agency addresses the wants of the specific client group					
99. of other communication and informational means mentioned on the Web pages					
100. that staff and specific service providers are identified and highlighted					
101. that the agency is over promising					
102. that communication resources have been given to certain programs over others					
103. suggesting that promotion expenditure is a cost					
104. that the organization is responsible for Web site communication					
People					
105. that the agency considers their staff as a component of their services					

106.	that the agency considers other clients/ users as a component of their services					
	Physical Evidence					
107.	that the agency considers physical evidence as a component of their services					

Communication Objectives

Is there evidence…		0	1	2	3	4
	Informing					
108.	of any new services announced					
109.	of clear messages					
110.	of simple messages					
111.	of short messages					
112.	of basic information					
113.	that more information is about the terms of the programs and services					
114.	of in-depth information					
	Education					
115.	that messages communicate potential benefits					
116.	that programs provide description and design					
117.	that information provides what to bring					
118.	of information on current users of the program					
119.	of information on the staff delivering the program					
120.	of FAQ					
	Persuading					
121.	of words creating vivid images					
122.	of potential benefits stated					
123.	that value is created for the customer in order to have them return					
124.	that information is presented with benefits to the clients					
125.	that messages gain attention					
126.	that messages are targeted towards a specific group					
127.	that messages are geared toward non-users					
128.	of emotion in messages					
	Reminding					
129.	that messages are easy to remember					
130.	that messages target current clients					
131.	that the Web pages provide information on other media being used					

Promotion Mix

Is there evidence…		0	1	2	3	4
132.	of the agency using advertising					
133.	of public service announcements					
134.	of systems in place for the agency to respond to consumer inquiries regarding promotion					

135.	of personal communication					
136.	of staff having incentives to encourage new users					
137.	that the agency has matched its staff with the type of people characterized in the target market					
138.	that incentives are used					
	If so, what categories of incentives are used					

2. Design

Indicate how well the content is designed

Layout	Very Poor	Poor	Adequate	Good	Excellent
139. The layout is clear					
140. Information is well organized					
141. Limited use of scrolling (important information and links at the top)					
142. Limited proofing and spelling errors					
143. The use of text and pictures is well balanced					
144. Graphics are sophisticated and clear (short download time and are useful)					
145. Is there a site map available					
146. The appearance is professional					
147. There appears to use the best technology					
148. There is use of innovative features					
149. There are features that are entertaining to use					
150. Clear use of colour and background					
Maintenance					
151. Evidence of updating within the last 24 hours					
152. Evidence of updating within the last 3 days					
153. Are programs current and up-to-date					
Integration					
154. All the pages look the same					
155. Message consistency, the design elements are all identical					

3. Electronic Service Quality

Indicate how well the Web pages are at electronic service quality

Efficiency	Very Poor	Poor	Adequate	Good	Excellent
156. Different ways to get straight to where you need to go					
157. Makes it easy to get anywhere					

158. Good signpost menus at all times					
159. Pages load fast					
160. It enables quickly					
161. Completes transactions quickly					
162. All clicks take you somewhere new (no dead ends)					
163. There are no missing link messages					
164. Navigation is easy					
165. The Web pages have links to relevant sites					
166. Can find what you want with a minimum number of clicks					
Systems availability					
167. Pages launch and run right away					
168. Pages do not freeze					
169. The Web pages always work correctly					
Fulfillment					
170. It is truthful about its offerings					
171. It makes accurate promises about the service offerings					
Privacy					
172. It appears to protect personal information from other sites					
173. It protects information about personal Web behaviour					
174. Transactions appear to be safe					
175. It appears to be trustworthy					
176. The agency behind is reputable					
Responsiveness					
177. Opportunity to give feedback					
178. It provides contact information of agency members					
179. It provides user support					
180. It appears to take care of problems promptly					
Customization					
181. There are feedback mechanisms					
182. It is able to give personal attention					
183. It understands specific needs					
184. It has features that can be personalized					
185. It is able to store preferences and offer extra services or information based on preferences					
186. It does a good job of making suggestions					

Appendix E

Research Journal Example

Question 1 Black, Question 4 Red Question 7 purple Question 10 brown

Question 2 Bright red Question 5, yellow Question 8 teal

Question 3 Blue Question 6 Green Question 9 orange

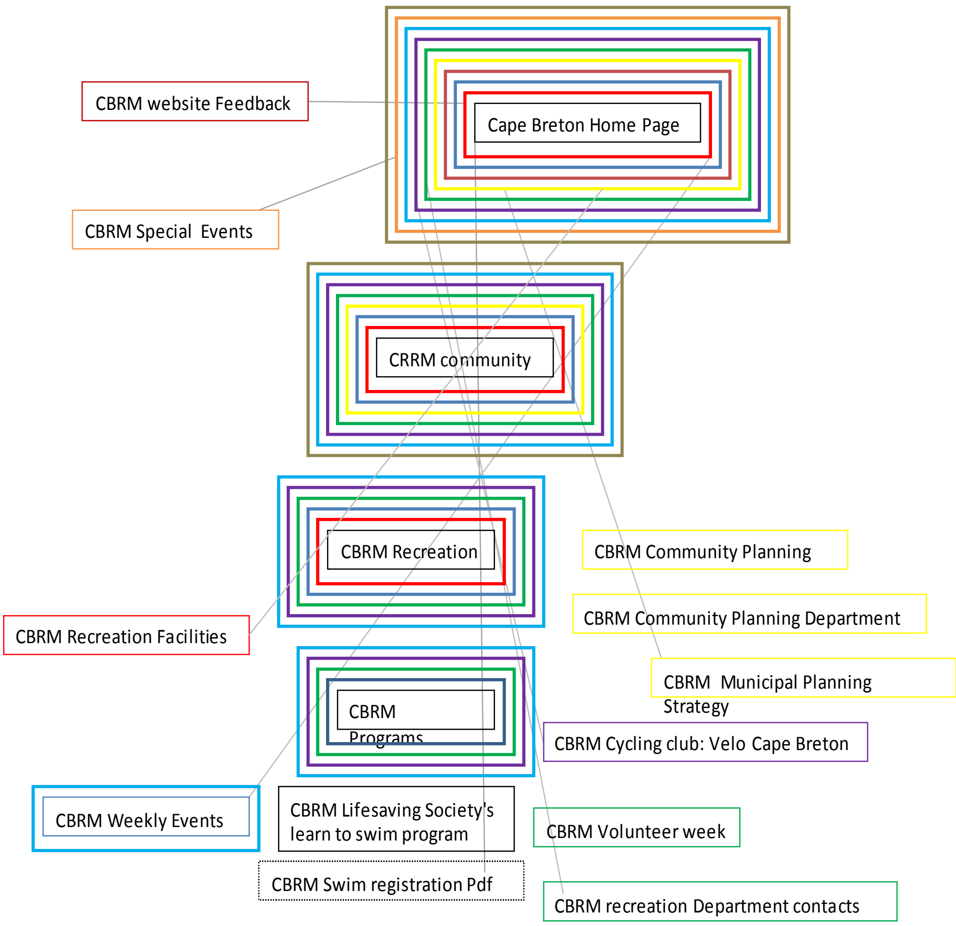
Question 157 D	**dl_org. Information is well organized**
Cape Breton	- it was fairly well organized but I did not get a link to the hockey site A -quite spacey did not find fitness where I thought A -For the most part, but the Contact us button was small G _Not that organized, was hard to find a municipal plan A -for the most part, but did not really get a distinct answer. A little too spacey and too many big paragraphs on one page A -too many bullet points A -Did not find art class where I would have thought A -1 page info is too long on page, could show a calendar or something P -for the most part well done, but did not get my solution G
Charlottetown	info was nicely spaced and layout well but had to go into the leisure guide to find solution A -it was well organized but on 2 out of the 5 pages there was a lot of scrolling G **with the use of scrolling it cuts down on the number of page. But what is more important??* -1 out of the 5 pages was too long G -Information seemed to be presented logically G -it was well organized but just too long on 2 pages and very repetitive on 1 A
Cornwall	-information was well organized in categories and stuff but there was too much scrolling going on for main indexes G
Brantford	Info was well organized but paragraphs were long. The pages were all good sizes G The info that was there was good G
Drummondville	1 poor 4 good G
Sault Ste. Marie	In a very logical order—what you would expect G Some of the text could have been laid out better
Question 174 ESQ	**dl_scroll. Limited use of scrolling**
Cape Breton	-2 pages were over standard size (size of paper) A _2 pages were over standard, one central one was way too long. VP.

	-one page had too much scrolling A -should have info higher on 2nd page G -one page over standard and one page info needed to be higher A -1 page out of 5 was way too long and info should be at top better P -1 page was very bad and long, info needs to be org. better VP -out of the 2 pages , really did not need to scroll E
Charlottetown	One page was over standard size and the pdf was way over standard size and required a lot of scrolling, again no hyperlinks. A -2 were over standard size but not super long (2 pages worth) would have been good but the hockey link was at the bottom of a long page. A *again, what is more important information at the top with more pages to open or less pages more scrolling. I think it should be less scrolling and have sites further customized to include more options in a smart, clear way. Had an organizational content issue. Which is the best way to organize content??? Facilities, Ppl??* Only 1 page over standard G -one out of 2 was over standard, but really not to bad G -2 pages were a little long out of 3 A - 2 pages were a little long out of 4 G
Cornwall	-only one page out of 5 was a little over standard G
Brantford	-all pages were standard size E
Chatham-Kent	Rec-Connenct page is kind of long G
Drummondville	2 over standard

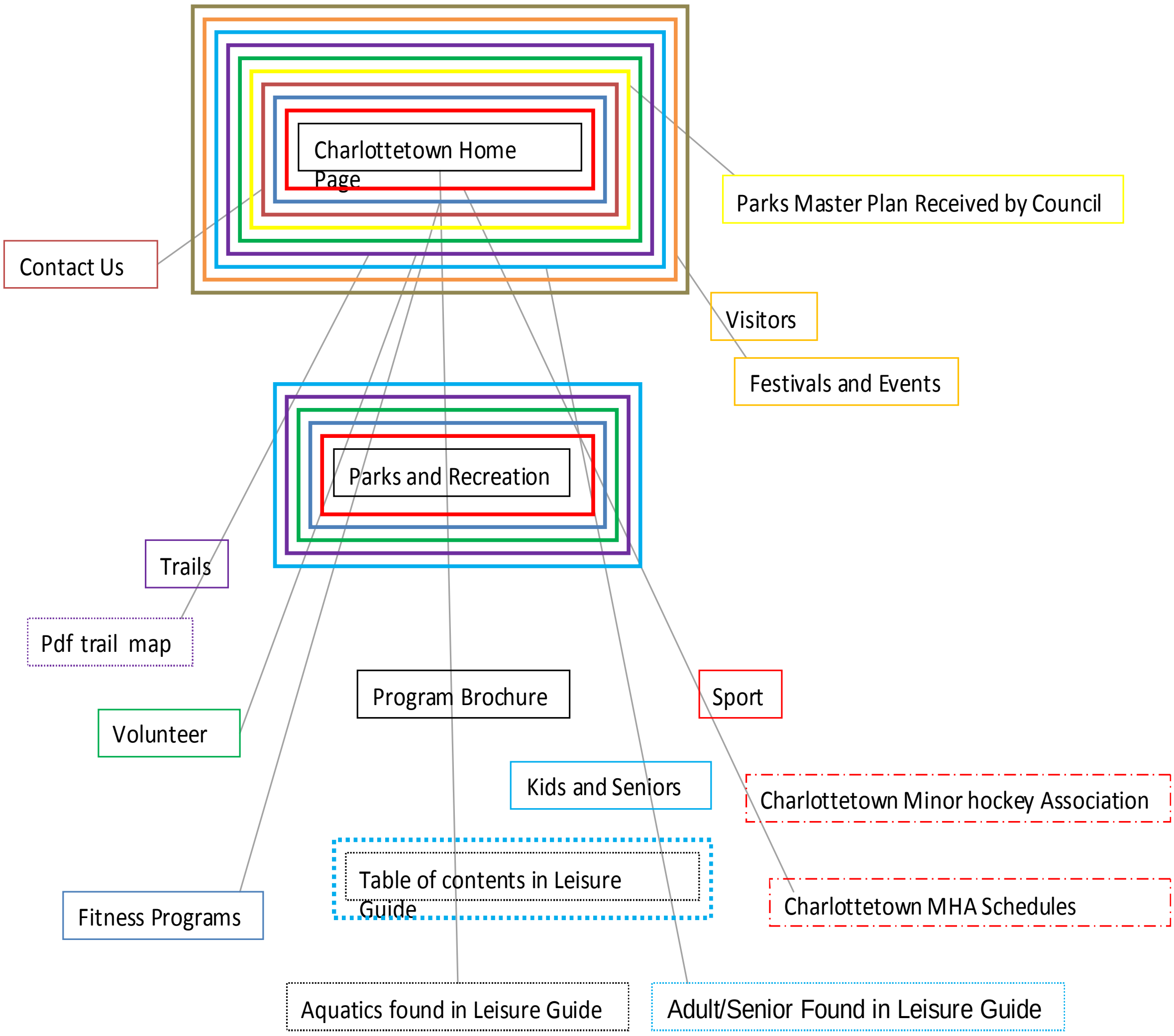
Appendix F
Web Trails

Question 1 Black,	Question 4 Red	Question 7 purple	Question 10 brown
Question 2 Bright red	Question 5, yellow	Question 8 teal	PDF ....
Question 3 Blue	Question 6 Green	Question 9 orange	Partnering Org. _._._._

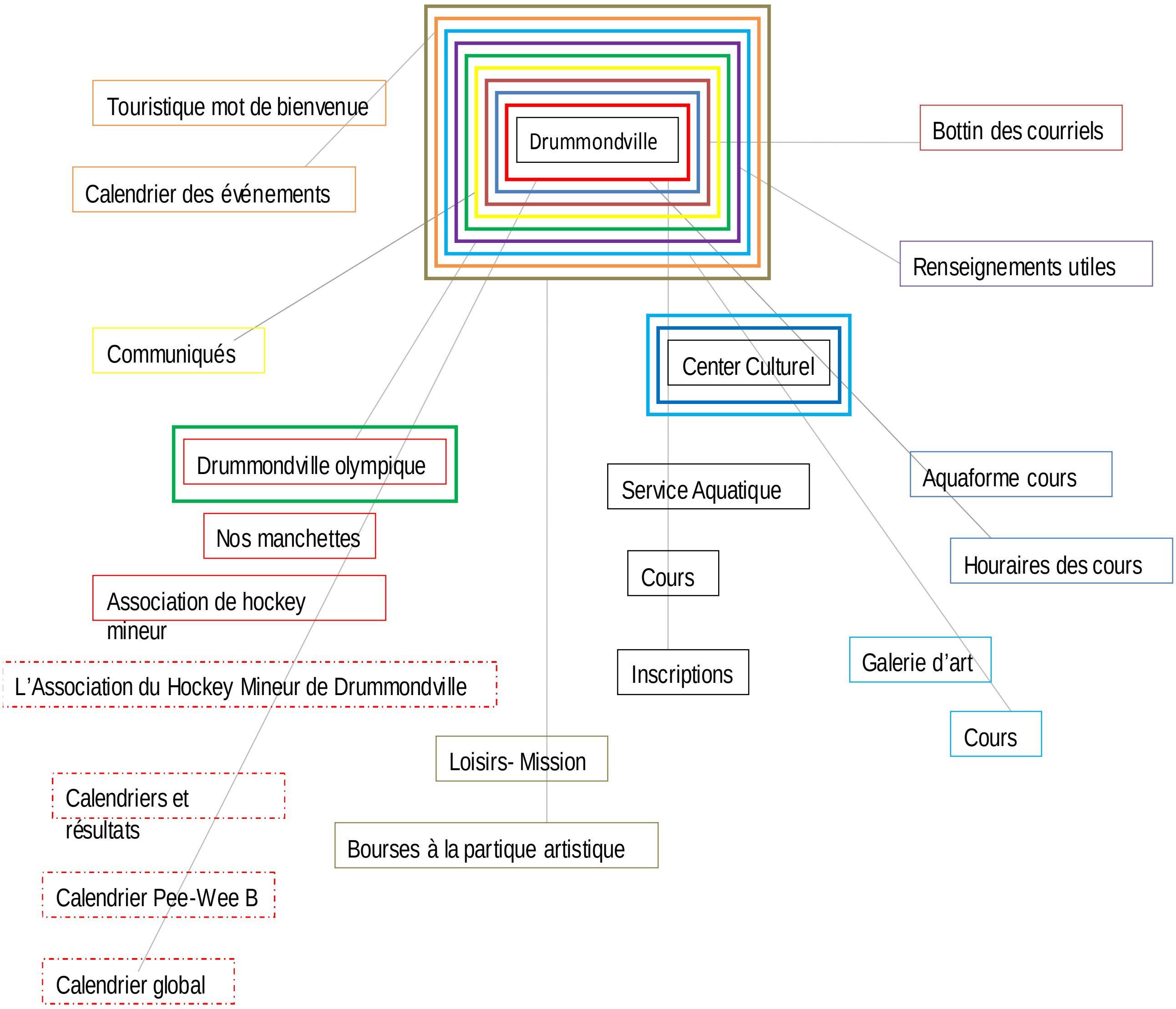
Cape Breton NS Trails



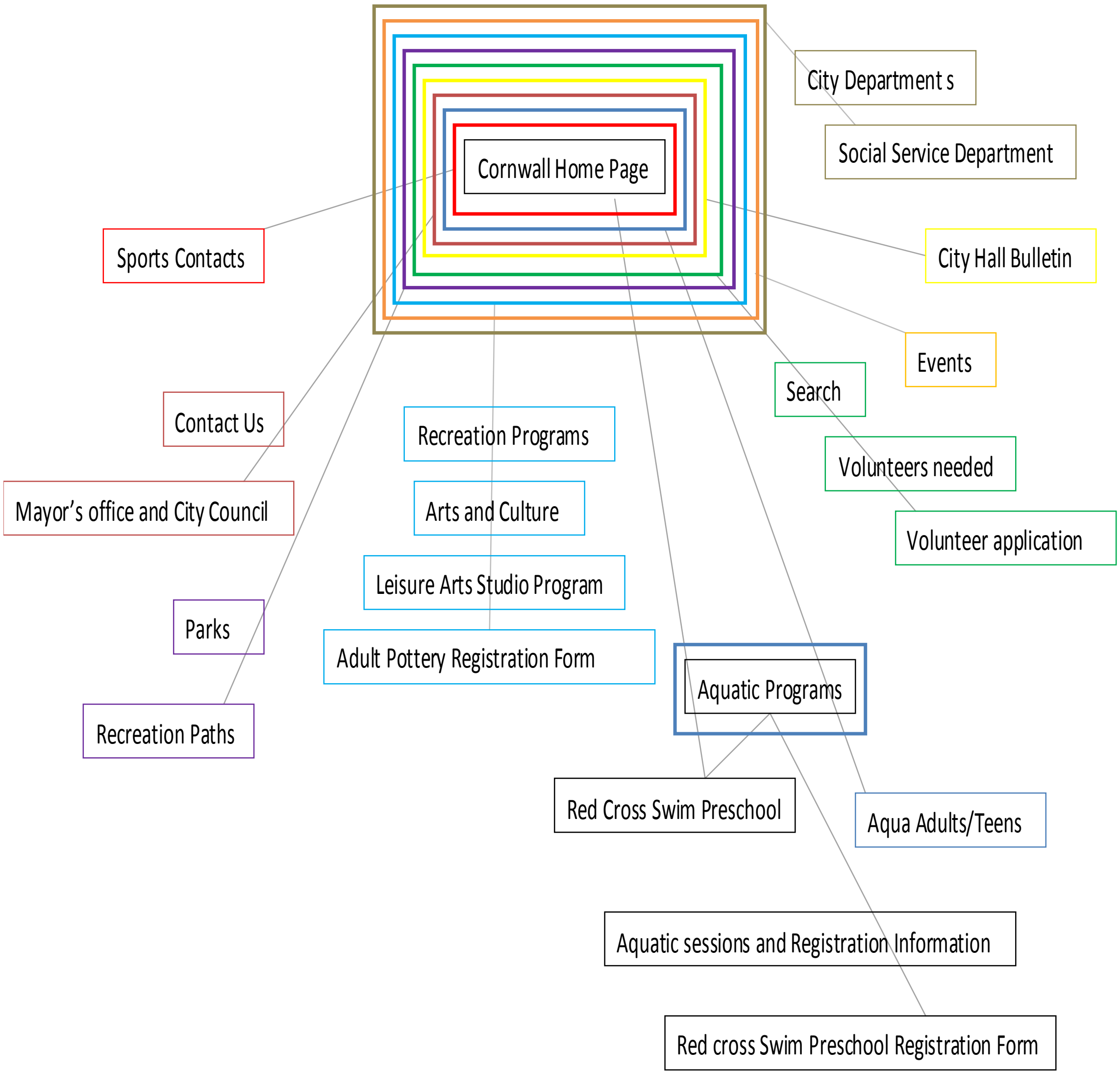
Charlottetown PEI Trails



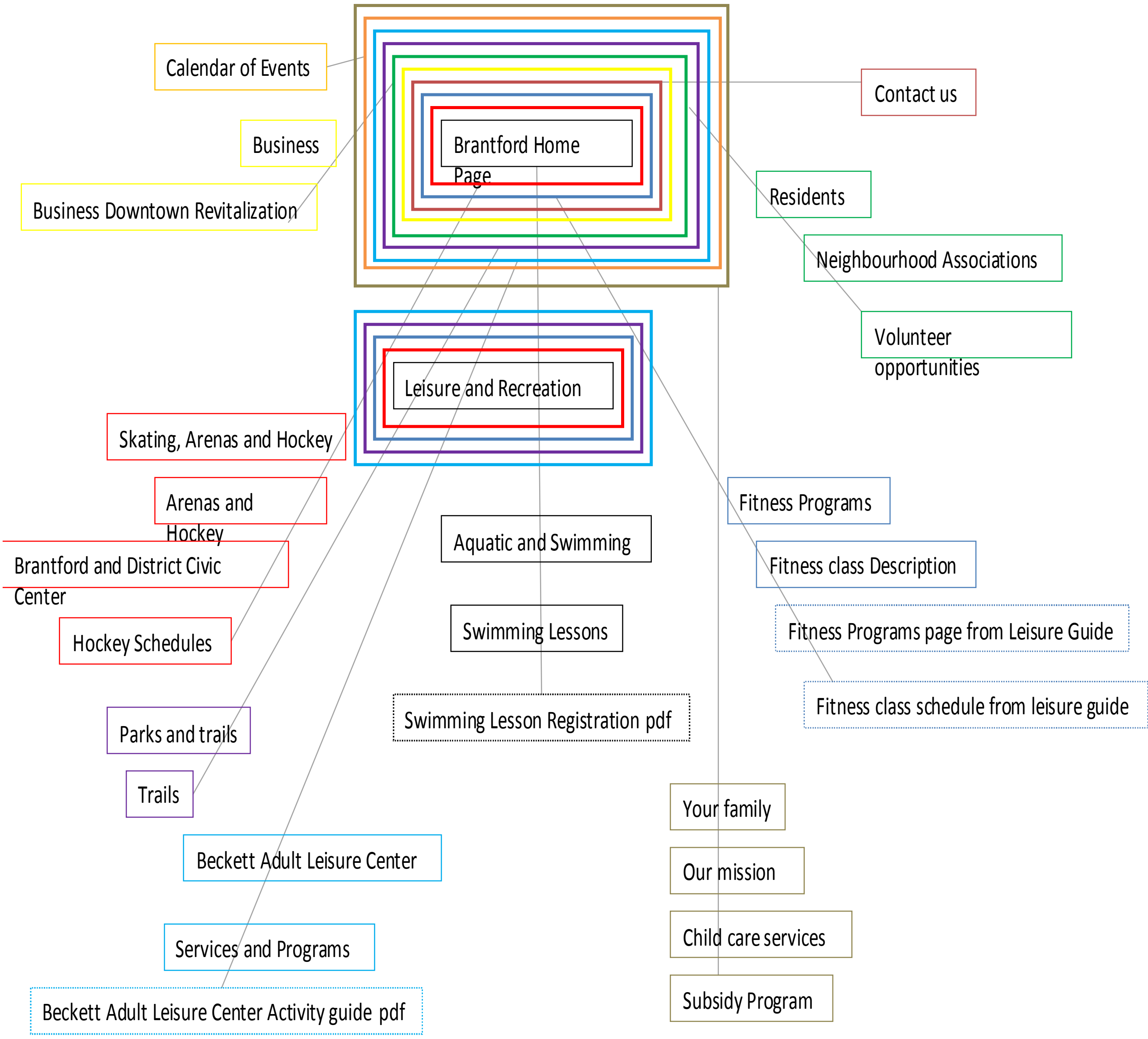
Drummondvile QB Trails



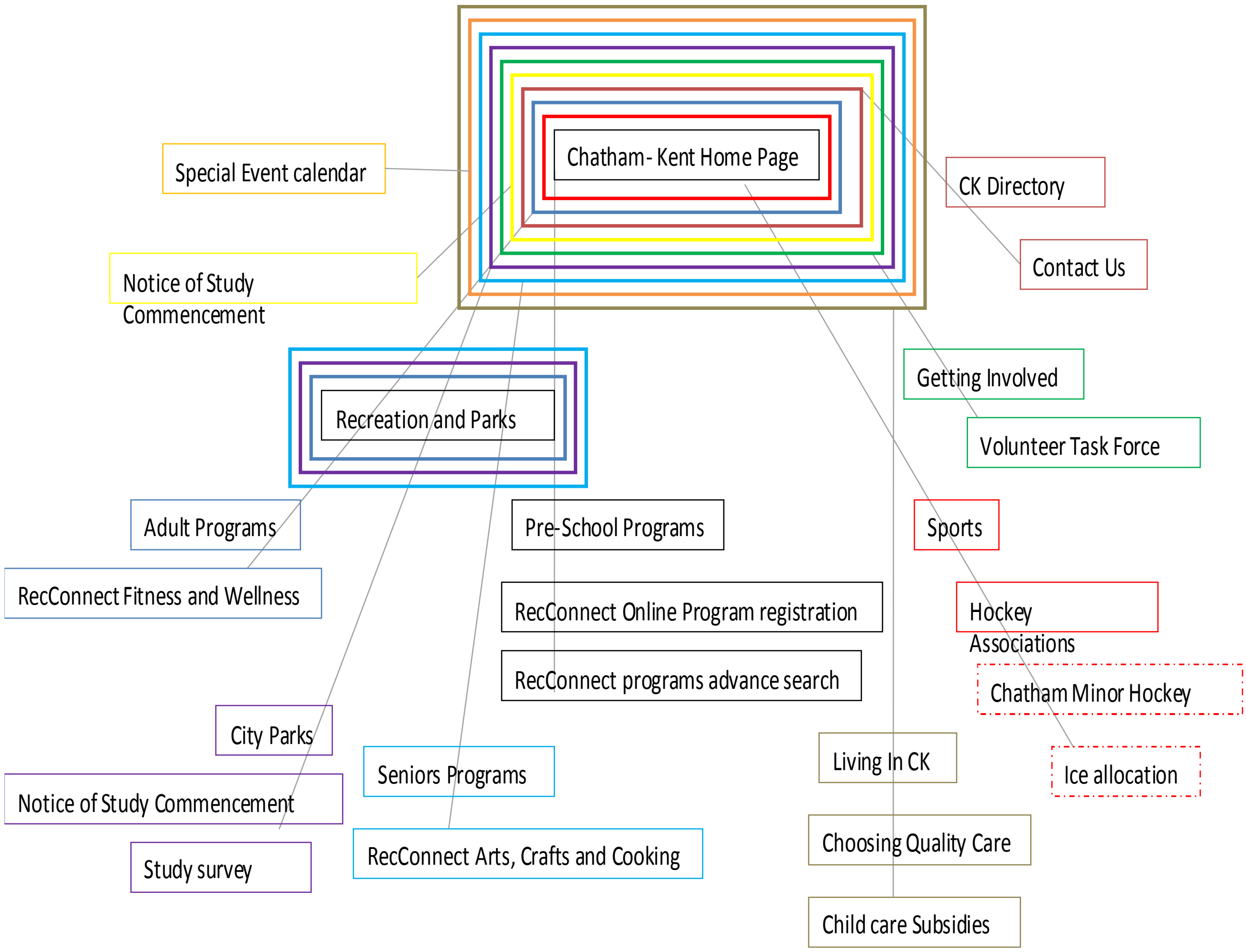
Cornwall ON Trails



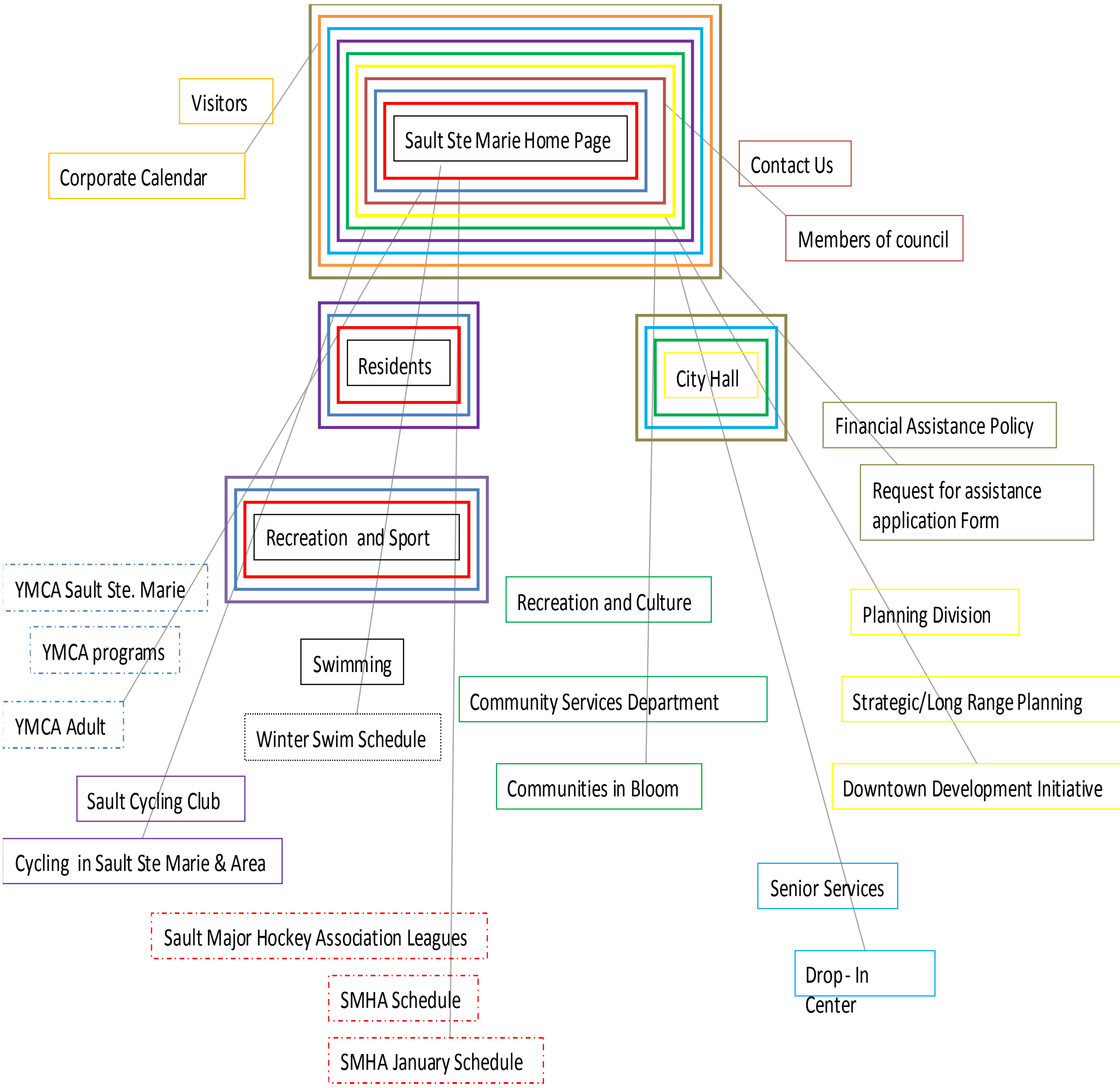
Brantford ON Trails



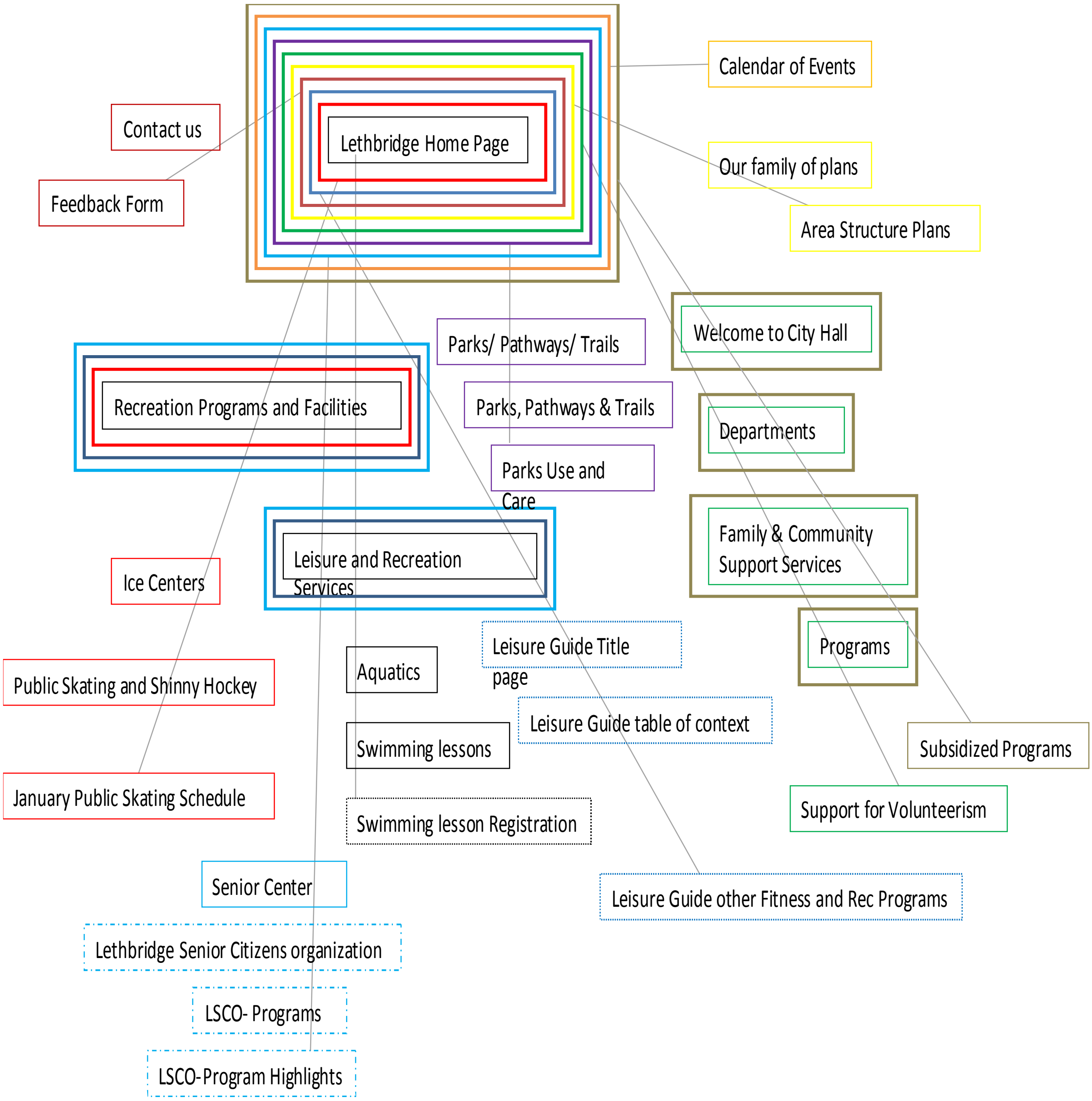
Chatham Kent ON Trails



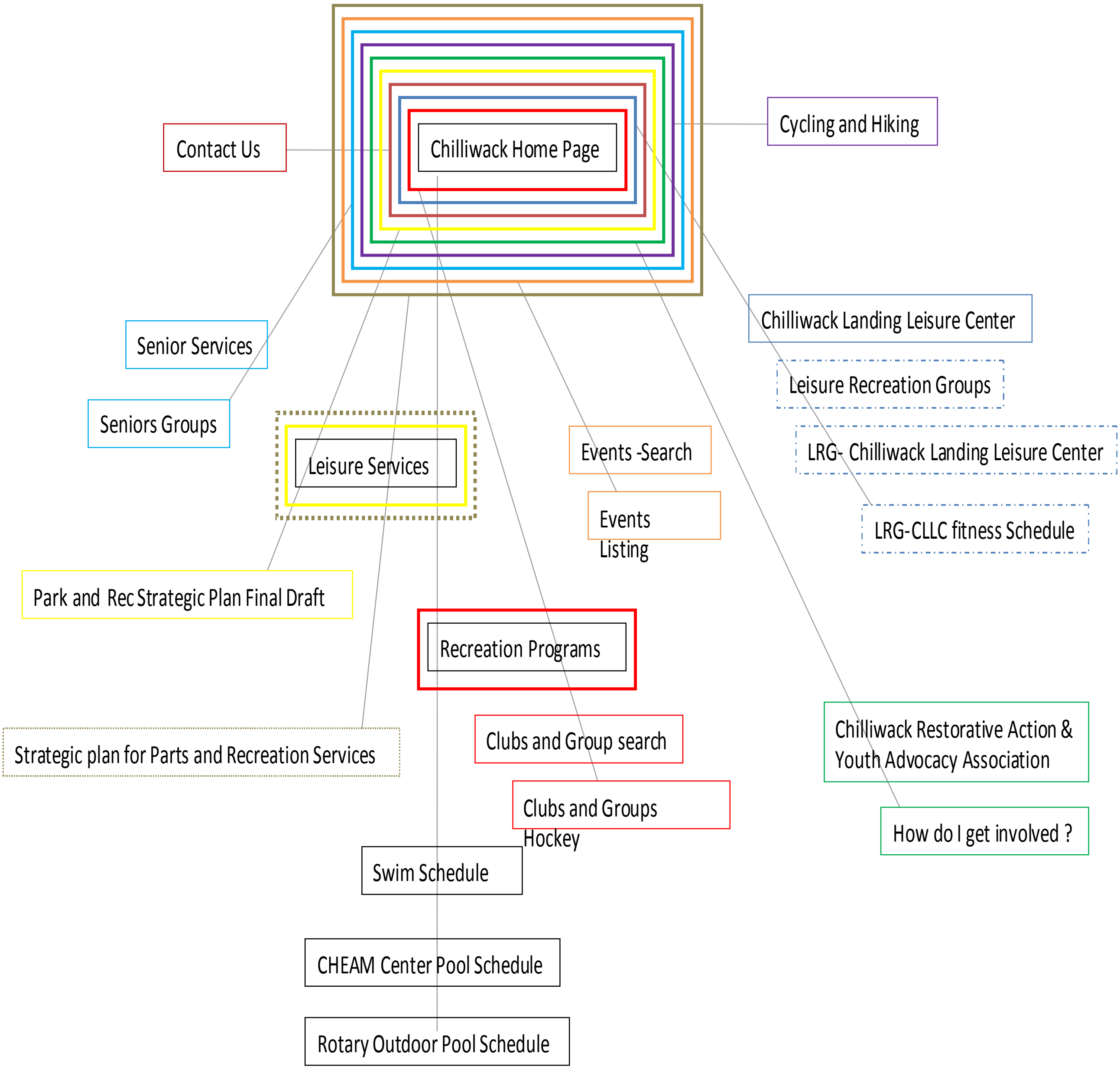
Sault Ste Marie ON Trails



Lightbridge AB Trails



Chilliwack BC Trails



Prince George BC Trials