

The Elliott Group

e-Service Relationship Builders

Corporate Fact Sheet

Vision



The Elliott Group is a consulting practice committed to the design and development of superior information and knowledge systems that satisfy the needs of individuals and organizations. As explorers we generate insights and innovation by helping our clients understand the dynamic role that the information interface and the pursuit of knowledge plays in establishing and sustaining a profitable relationship with their target customers in a world of personalized environments.

Mission



To provide our clients insight into the needs, capabilities, expectations, and behavior of their target customers that informs and advances the development of customer friendly information-centric processes, services and technologies.

Value for Clients



The Elliott Group's services help our clients:

- Enhance and optimize their existing web sites and other e-services.
- Develop and assess new e-service concepts.
- Attain an in-depth understanding of their e-service users to improve customer segmentation and build more value in their e-service relationships.
- Gain a fresh perspective on the ongoing customer revolution to make strategic decisions about online and offline market opportunities.

Services



We offer a range of services to our clients that provide knowledge about information users, insights about their decision processes and effective solutions for meeting their needs. Services are standalone or can be combined and include:

- Interface Checker™
- Subject Sorter™
- Process Analyzer™
- Target Tester™
- Remote Usability Testing
- Segmentation Checker™
- Concept Generator™
- The User Rules™ Seminars
- Topic Trender™

Experience



From the first commercial gateway information service to automotive e-commerce, The Elliott Group has worked on groundbreaking technologies, utilizing a user-focused perspective and constantly developing innovative research and targeting methods to provide strategic and tactical insight for building interactive relationships. We have designed and conducted custom as well as syndicated research and consulting projects for many Fortune 1000 companies. We have extensive experience in new to the world markets and technology including pioneering syndicated studies covering Internet usage, consumer information use, electronic learning in the home, interactive healthcare and financial services, broadband use, PDAs, consumer communication services and multiple studies of the SOHO market. Our talents have made us the choice for leading companies such as ATT, Ziff-Davis, Wachovia, Ford, Motorola, and Microsoft.

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The Elliott Group Difference

We believe there is a fundamental paradigm shift in business markets and peoples lives as a result of the Internet and other interactive technologies. Your customers' ability to directly access information and exercise choice and control is creating a revolutionary change in their relationship with you and how your company must interact with them as this "new" customer.

The Elliott Group's User Rules™ framework provides insights into this paradigm shift and an effective strategy for developing and assessing e-services for this relationship revolution. Based on over 20 years of qualitative research, the User Rules™ framework is grounded in tactical results but bridges the new interactive customer to strategic implications for your business. Fundamental strategic perspectives we have developed from ongoing research that help you to understand and respond to this relationship revolution include:

- The Internet is a personal information tool and not a media.
- To reach your customer you must first satisfy them as an information user.
- The new information environment demands new value propositions in your customer relationships.
- Brand management has changed, as a host of new elements are contributing to the expected, experienced and remembered utility of your brand. These elements are having more decisive effects than media in your customer relationships.
- New expectations for customer-facing integration create new requirements for your business operations.

These perspectives are incorporated into The Elliott Group's User Rules™ Relationship Model that we use to analyze e-services, assess their level of development and provide direction for the next and future stages of e-service development. We apply the User Rules™ Relationship Model and related methodologies to yield specific actionable recommendations and project success for e-service initiatives such as:

- Implementing incremental changes to your existing website design to improve conversion rates and usability.
- Integrating your e-service processes and content with all your customer contact points.
- Developing your next generation website to address increasing customer expectations and competition in the marketplace.
- Identifying additional customer segmentation based on information use and online processes.
- Creating a strategic framework to direct future development and build long-term e-service relationships with your customers.

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- **Interface Checker™**
 - Rules-based information interface analysis system
 - Quick and cost-effective method to identify key user interface problems, then provides solutions for key user interface contact points.
- **Subject Sorter™**
 - A combination of custom consulting and specialized software for organizing content so customers can more easily understand and navigate your e-service.
 - Develop intuitive navigational hierarchy, terminology and information architecture for your screen-based content.
- **Process Analyzer™**
 - A comprehensive study of customer processes encompassing online, offline and integrated customer experiences to provide in-depth understanding and relevant insights about your customers as they encounter multiple contact points across your company.
 - Drive e-service improvements, better integrate customer contact points to your e-service and improve customer service.
- **Target Tester™**
 - Comprehensive information interface testing with defined target customers and select processes.
 - Specific recommendations and answers for interface improvement and next step development based on in-depth insights of user behavior and their interface experience.
- **Segmentation Checker™**
 - Target customer selection and verification based on a unique psychological system.
 - Brings your market segmentation to another level based on target customer information usage and instinctual approach to problem solving.
- **Concept Generator™**
 - Information & knowledge concept research and development including the use of Segmentation Checker™.
 - Relevant insights for assessing intended target needs, making key development decisions and avoiding costly early stage development mistakes.
- **The User Rules™ Seminars**
 - Strategically oriented learning sessions about the “relationship revolution” being driven by interactive technologies and the customer as information user.
 - Based on The Elliott Group's proprietary The User Rules™ framework that explains the new paradigms of the customer, their process, their content needs and the information interface.
 - Integrates powerful market shaping ideas into the executive level decision-making process
- **Topic Trender™**
 - Explore critical market shifts affecting your business & how best to address them.
 - Insights into important as well as subtle dangers and opportunities in the marketplace.

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Project Examples

PROJECT:

A Fortune 100 intranet portal site had developed over the years into a large and confusing collection of links and content. Productivity directly related to the bottom line suffered as employees had difficulty quickly navigating to relevant content for their everyday work processes.

Tools & Methodologies Used

Portable Usability Lab, Card Sorting Software, Custom Consulting

Solution

A streamlined and efficient interface that allowed users to quickly access mission-critical content and links used on a daily basis and easily find important content that needed to be found less frequently. The Elliott Group used a portable usability lab and specialized software to identify issues and develop an information architecture for multiple user groups on the portal including: business principals, sales force members, service managers and advisors and department managers. Design directives also took into account users' knowledge and familiarity with the existing portal design.

Benefits

- Increased productivity as less time is spent searching for content, and the content is more quickly integrated with their work process.
- More reliable and efficient dissemination of content.
- Smooth transition from the new to the old interface with a limited learning curve.
- Communication and server cost reduction.

PROJECT:

Major national US bank needed to make significant changes to their online banking services in order to remain competitive in the online banking space.

Tools & Methodologies Used:

Segmentation Checker™, Concept Generator™, Focus Groups

Solution:

A set of development directives to guide management through a major overhaul of their online banking services. The Elliott Group used focus groups to assess various online banking concepts and services. Careful segmentation of test subjects by their general online experience as well as by their information and online banking service usage helped to create valuable insights, sound assessments and reliable indicators of customer reaction to the new services.

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Benefits

- Less money spent overall on the development of the new services as fewer resources were spent correcting mistakes later in the process.
- Improved customer satisfaction as the online services better met the customer needs.
- Improved positioning of online offering vis-à-vis competitors in their market.

PROJECT:

Online retailer of specialty motorcycle parts needed to quickly enhance and optimize their website to increase conversion rates and revenue but could not afford full-blown usability testing.

Tools & Methodologies Used:

Interface Checker™, EZ-Points Developer Report

Solution:

The Elliott Group used our proprietary Interface Checker™ service to analyze the website and make specific recommendations for improvements. The rules-based analysis was provided in our easy to read and understand EZ-Points Developer Report format for fast knowledge transfer to the development team.

Benefits

- In one week the retailer had a comprehensive set of directives for making improvements to their website. As a result of these changes the retailer's:
 - Conversion rate increased 42% from 1.2% to 1.7%
 - Average purchase amount increased 15%
 - Number of items purchased increased by one item for every two customers
- The development team was able to carry forward knowledge they learned about website design during this project into future website changes.

PROJECT:

Leading electronic content provider wanted to better understand the "library of the future" for multiple user segments and test preliminary electronic information service concepts that included both proprietary and certified content.

Tools & Methodologies Used:

Segmentation Checker™, Concept Generator™, Focus Groups

Solution:

Developed important insights into key user segments and assessed a range of concepts for new services to guide management in their strategic development decisions. Using a series of focus groups and careful segmentation of library users

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according to their information behaviors, The Elliott Group tested new service concepts and profiled “library of the future” users.

Benefits

- Key information needs and drivers for market segments were revealed.
- Preliminary concepts were assessed and prioritized for the next stage of development.
- New market requirements for key user segments were identified.

PROJECT:

Internal and third party website developers of a Fortune 100 company needed to better understand the online consumer and the implications for future website development to make development decisions and allocate resources.

Tools & Methodologies Used:

User Rules™ framework, User Rules™ Relationship Model

Solution:

The Elliott Group presented a User Rules™ seminar explaining the online customer, their information behaviors, their shopping trends, Infographic™ Profiling and the design implications for website developers. The seminar content was based on primary research with online shoppers, predominantly usability lab testing, that had been distilled and formulated into a comprehensive framework.

Benefits

- Developers were provided with a perspective of the online customer that helped them anticipate the next stage of website development rather than react to the market.
- The framework provided a more user-centric and disciplined approach to analyzing the effectiveness of website content and functionality.
- Website managers and developers could make development decisions with more objectivity and confidence.

PROJECT:

Big Three automotive manufacturer was rolling out a major new information technology initiative involving both hardware systems and software applications to create a paperless environment in dealership sales and service departments.

Tools & Methodologies Used:

Custom Consulting, Surveys, On-Site Interviews, Ethnographic Studies

Solution:

Conducted a pre-implementation assessment to surface and understand intended users (demand-side) factors that would affect the implementation and national rollout

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of the new technology. The Elliott Group used a combination of surveys, on-site interviews and ethnographic studies with a range of stakeholders including: principals, general managers, service managers, service advisors and technicians to understand how the implementation would integrate with their current work processes.

Benefits

- A higher degree of success for the national rollout of the initiative through:
- Identification of key obstacles and issues for a successful rollout including those related to organizational structure, employee incentives, current work processes, and existing technology systems.
- A prioritization of the initiative's components for a staged rollout based upon their likelihood of acceptance and usage by the intended segments.
- Identification of training content needs and most effective training methods for the initiative's various components by user segment.
- Identification of key obstacles and issues for a successful rollout including those related to organizational structure, employee incentives, current work processes, and existing technology systems.
- A prioritization of the initiative's components for a staged rollout based upon their likelihood of acceptance and usage by the intended segments.
- Identification of training content needs and most effective training methods for the initiative's various components by user segment.

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Research Tools

The Elliott Group has a full complement of qualitative and quantitative research tools for creating the most appropriate research design, whether it involves group dynamics, exploratory or diagnostic techniques or the latest off-line or online technology to reach your globally dispersed customer base.

- Usability Methods
 - Remote Usability Testing
 - Facility-based Usability Testing
 - Portable Usability Lab Testing
 - User Experience Testing
 - Taxonomy Testing
 - Ethnographic Studies
 - Information User Profiling

- Group Research Methods
 - Group Facilitation
 - Focus Groups (traditional & online)
 - Mini-Groups
 - Dyads, Triads, and Quads
 - Expert & Consumer Panels
 - Longitudinal Electronic Group Discussions
 - Online Brainstorming

- In-Depth Interview (IDI) Qualitative Research Methods
 - Telephone interviewing
 - Executive interviewing
 - Expert interviewing

- Online Surveys
 - Emerging Market Modeling
 - Service and Usage Satisfaction
 - Parameter Auditing
 - Primary Research





Our Approach To Projects

There are many innovative and creative ways to approach a project in order to develop an effective solution. Regardless of the approach, The Elliott Group has the expertise to help you design and implement the project strategy that best meets your objectives and resources, and the performance standards to ensure the highest quality results.

Communication

- Comprehensive communication with the client from start to finish to maximize integration with their business processes.
- Thorough discussion of assumptions, goals & objectives to inform independent situation and project assessment
- Creative and effective reporting to efficiently assimilate results into the decision-making process including our EZ Points Developer Report™.

Project Planning

- Rigorous recruiting and careful event scheduling to increase participation and maximize data capture
- Thorough project management to maintain the highest quality standards

Analytical Framework

- Objective-oriented project blueprint to maintain focus on client goals
- Innovative target profiling & segmentation to surface market insights
- Extensive interview and script guide drafting to triangulate data and translate project goals into tactical directions

Information Capture & Analysis

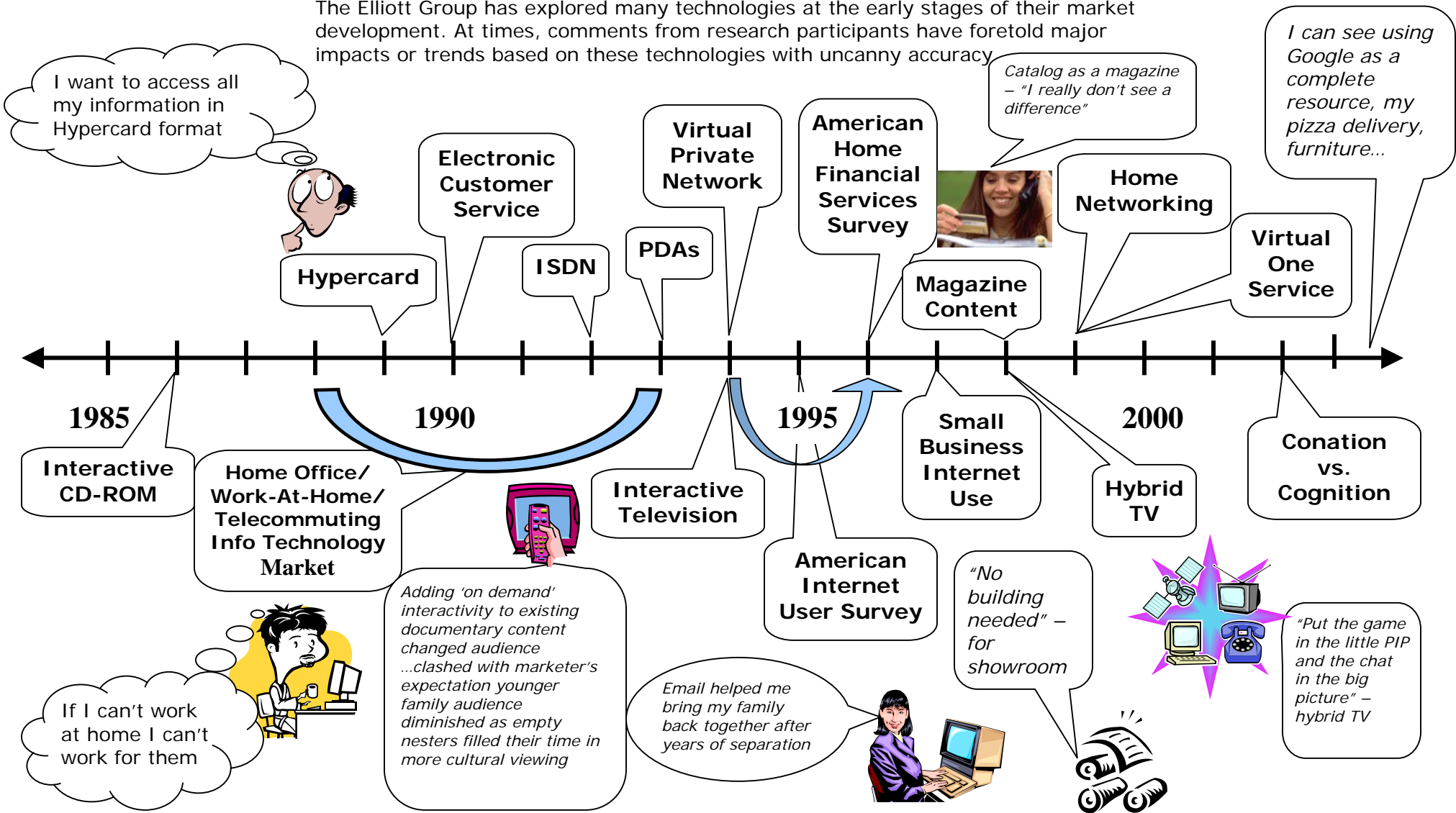
- Focused and structured interviewing to enhance target exploration and elicit participant responses that are relevant to project goals and solutions
- Comprehensive information capture and analysis to produce thorough and actionable recommendations and solutions

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Moments In Information Technology

The Elliott Group has explored many technologies at the early stages of their market development. At times, comments from research participants have foretold major impacts or trends based on these technologies with uncanny accuracy



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Representative Market Applications



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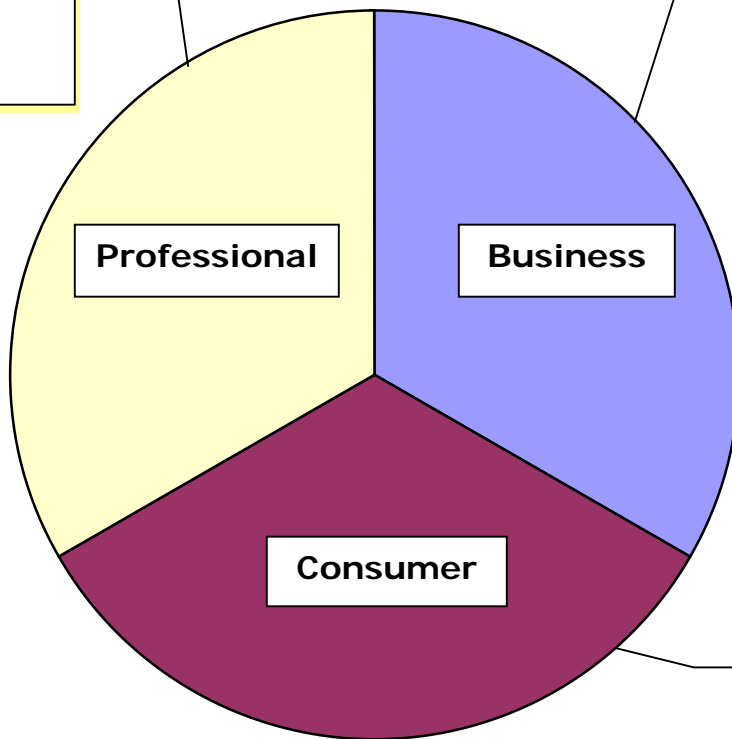


Representative Target Categories

The lists below represent only a portion of the many types of targets with which we have research experience.

- Engineers
- Lawyers
- Medical Personnel
- Graphic Intensives
- Educators
- Photographers
- Librarians
- ...
- ..
- .

- Corporate
- Financial Services
- Executives
- Interactive Services
- Small Business
- Work-At-Home
- IT/IS
- Mobile Remote Workers
- Media
- Purchasing Agents
- Retailers
- ...
- ..
- .



- Early Adopters
- Online Shoppers
- Grey Householders
- Empty Nesters
- Opinion Makers
- Auto Shoppers
- Students
- Influencers
- Homemakers
- ...
- ..
- .

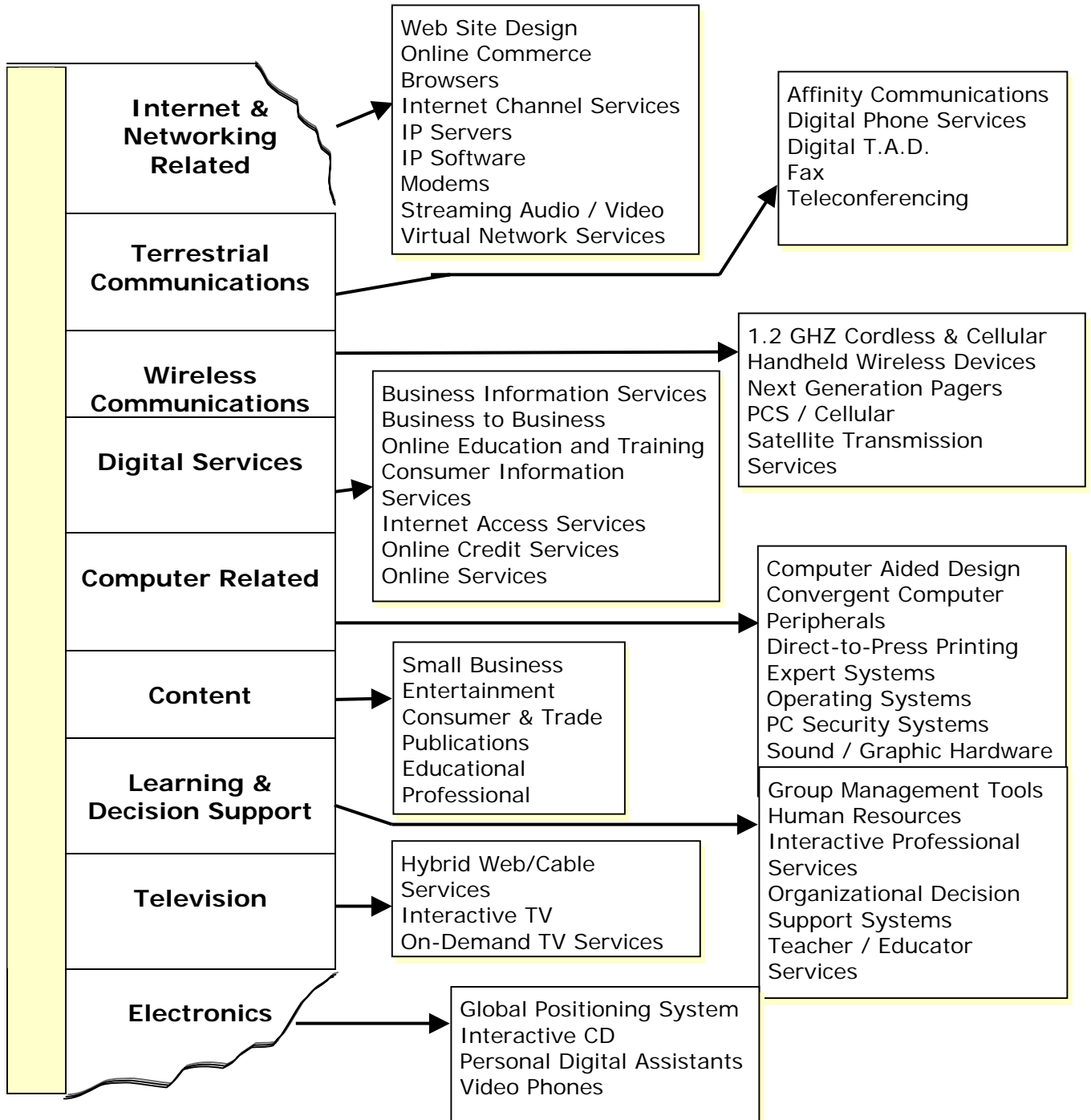
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Content & Technology Examples



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