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## Social Is Not Just About Communicating with Each Other

Recent research by Seattle start-up Qikspace shows that the way people recall interactions is really quite predictable. The things people remember are the following:

- 1) Who it was with
- 2) When it was
- 3) What it was about
- 4) What it was called
- 5) Where it took place
- 6) By What method

What varies is the order, with one exception. The highest ranking variable people remember is who they met or spoke with. This is why the application of social to the way we interact allows the user to see what you sent to whom, and/or received, regardless of the other parameters. The problem with this is that it isn't sufficient to solve the complex issue of interactions in the present and past. Most solutions frame present interactions in the style of a Facebook timeline.

We're all familiar with Facebook. Facebook changed the way we think of social. It wasn't the first social platform; others had made significant traction when Facebook

hit the scene. So why is it that Facebook took over the market? Was it a better interface, smarter presentation? The answer is no; what Facebook got right was that you were you and others were as you knew them, not aliases or fantasy characters. You knew who you were interacting with. It's now a trusted source of information on what people you know are doing and the things that they recommend or want to share. In a sense, Facebook is a news feed from people you trust and are interested in.

What Facebook doesn't do well is contextualize the past. Your personal circles, recreational circles, and work circles don't always intersect, or more specifically sometimes people do not want them to intersect. This is why Facebook doesn't make a good collaboration platform. Some may say, what about LinkedIn? Well, LinkedIn doesn't facilitate real interactions. It's considered a network of professional associations for the more established businessperson: in other words it is a better Rolodex and not much more.

To understand our complete social interaction needs, all the parameters should be addressed. In the real world, I need to find things that occurred in the past. This can become very complex when it involves interaction with others. Things occurred through different mediums; the people involved might have named files haphazardly, or documents were organized in folders and subfolders in such a way that the structure isn't immediately apparent. So how does social help the user in this process?

The key is that social includes who, what, when, where, and why.

If the user is able to explore all this, then finding items becomes easy and interactions become even easier. The research reveals that all variables are part of the social interaction framework. And that to find things more efficiently, the system of finding must allow the sequence of the search to be in any order.

Search results produce a subset that's easily browsed by the user; that's contextualization. Here's an example of contextualization that yields optimal results: What's the minimum amount of information you need from someone to find a spoon they own? Answer: just their address. Why? With only the address, I can find the optimal way to their residence. Once I arrive, kitchens are in a predictable location, and with a high degree of probability the spoon occupies a drawer, usually an upper drawer next to the sink or dishwasher. If it is not, it won't take long to find the

correct drawer. When the drawer opens, you have the advantage of being able to see all the spoons at a glance and pick the one that's optimal for your intended use.

How does this differ from a traditional search? In a traditional search, exact directions to a residence, kitchen, drawer, and place within the drawer would be given. With that method, there are numerous opportunities for errors in the information provided or the person giving the directions could spend an inordinate amount of time verifying the information they were providing. In addition, this method points the user to the exact spoon you think they are looking for; further communications may need to take place to verify the spoon and also to verify that the user gives accurate information, you would have to go and look in the drawer yourself. Also, what if the spoons are dirty and still in the dishwasher? Think of the previous example as a computer doing the search: it only does what you tell it to. It becomes evident that the traditional way of providing information is what creates inefficiencies in interactions.

By contrast, the social framework of interactions allows users to transcend traditional methods and find what they need efficiently, to interact with minimal barriers. The concept of social applied to our interactions with others will change our world and free us from the burdensome complexities of explaining in great detail to our devices what our desires are.

## About Us

Qikspace ([www.qikspace.com](http://www.qikspace.com)) specializes in social collaboration software with a personal relationship management (PRM) component. Qikspace was started as a research project in 2011 the emphasis was the analysis of contextual relevance in relation to human interactions. The result of this research became the platform that is being developed and enhanced today. Our unique philosophical and technical approach has allowed us to create a solution to the complex world of online human interactions and the consequent collaborations.

## About the Author

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