

**"Windows of culture: An analysis of  
Israeli ORT school websites"**

by

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## **Abstract**

School websites are useful in providing an additional environment to educate and impart culture to the collectivity. They reflect the collective phenomenon of behaviour and traditional ideas, and at the same time, reflect the efforts made by the educators to teach cultural identity, values and social skills.

The work of renowned anthropologist Geert Hofstede (1991) on cultural dimensions has contributed to the study and reassessment of current theories on software and websites, which interact with the cultures of societies in which they function, and are still relevant to the constant evolution of technology (communication tools) in the educational environment.

The aim of this research is to explore how cultural dimensions are reflected on ORT school websites in Israel. This study in a relatively new field offers educators an insight into new options and innovations offered by school websites, and provides reflections on their use in cultural education. In this context, the importance of this research lies in its contribution to the pedagogical dialogue on culture, and as it is reflected on school websites.

This study applies Hofstede's (1991) work, in which he classifies cultural characteristics prevalent in global organizations into five "cultural dimensions": power distance, individualism & collectivism, masculinity & femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and time orientation, and design expert Aaron Marcus' (2001) interpretation and application of this model to website designs worldwide.

The subject of this study consists of 54 Ort school websites operating in Israel.

The findings on ORT school websites echo Hofstede's characteristics on the reflection of power distance in Israeli culture. However, my findings on Hofstede's three other dimensions – collectivism vs. individualism, masculinity vs. femininity, and

uncertainty avoidance – illustrate a more complex picture, with the elements reflected in differing patterns.

ORT school websites reflect both elements of culture as defined by Marcus (2001) and elements of standardization of website design. In recent years, there has been an upsurge in the software available globally to create and design websites, all using the same basic tools and elements of design.

In conclusion, schools' attempts to impart culture as part of their social education policies is reflected in the contents and design of their websites.

**Keywords:** culture; multi-culture; cultural; dimensions; school website; e-learning; e-schooling; cyber societies; globalization; intranet; interaction; user-interface design; global web design.

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## CONTENTS

<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>Chapter 1 –Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.2 Aim of research.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.3 Research questions.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.4 Background.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>1.4.1 ORT.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>1.4.2 Clickit.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>1.5 Previous research.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>1.5.1 Related research.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Chapter 2 – Methodology.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2.1 Overview of the study.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2.2 Type of Research.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>2.3 Subjects of this study.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>2.4 Limitations of this study.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>2.5 Specific exclusions from this study.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>2.6 Outline of the Research.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>2.7 Summary.....</b>	<b>28</b>

<b>Chapter 3 - Literature Review.....</b>	<b>29</b>
3.1 'Culture' as reflected on school websites.....	30
3.1.1 Defining 'culture', cross-cultural issues, Multi-culture and social education.....	31
3.1.2 The role of schools in teaching social behaviour, moral codes, and values as part of the existing culture.....	41
3.1.3 Social learning theory.....	43
3.2 School websites as ' <b>Windows of culture</b> ' - From E-Learning to E-Schooling .....	49
3.2.1 Interface design of web-based educational sites and culture.....	51
3.2.2 Interactivity through new communication media.....	57
3.2.3 The Intranet – E-schooling.....	59
3.2.4 Cyber societies.....	64
<b>Chapter 4 - Findings.....</b>	<b>72</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	72
4.2 Research question 1.....	74
4.3 Research question 2.....	85

4.4 Research question 3.....	93
4.5 Research question 4.....	105
<b>Chapter 5 - Conclusions.....</b>	<b>114</b>
5.1 Summary.....	114
5.2 Discussion of what can be learned from this research.....	119
5.3 Recommendations for further research, policy-making and practice.....	127
<b>References.....</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>Table list of Appendix.....</b>	<b>137</b>

## Appendix List

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>A</b>	Terminology.	<b>I</b>
<b>B</b>	Indexes from: Hofstede (1991) " <i>Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival.</i> "	<b>III</b>
<b>C</b>	Selected elements for each of the four 'cultural dimensions' (high vs. low power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculine vs., feminine, high vs. low uncertainty avoidance).	<b>V</b>
<b>D</b>	List of Tables.	<b>IX</b>
<b>E</b>	List of Figures.	<b>XI</b>
<b>F</b>	Examples of school web pages.	<b>TXIII</b>