

madeirabynight.com

Regulating behavior in small communities

madeira what!?

madeirabynight.com is a small web community that orbits around urban entertainment, party, music, party, night stuff and... have I mentioned party!?



With all this *party environment*, regulate behavior and controlling extremism is a hard task!

Approach...

Several authors state that visibility of norms/ rules, monitoring compliance, enforcement and bad behavior sanction should be present in any community that wants to succeed. If one of these 4 design principles is missing, regulation does not exist or at least is not effective.

madeirabynight.com forum only was showing the rules when members were in their registration process. So I persuaded the forum administrator to give more visibility to this registration agreement and also add a couple of specific norms/ etiquette rules regarding some common violations.

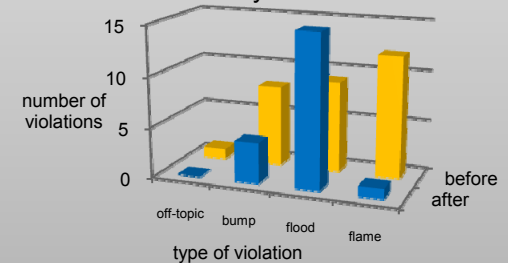
Method used...

I was trying to find out how to decrease the violation rate of norms/ etiquette rules in the mbn forum. How? Using ethnographic methodology to collect both qualitative and quantitative data:

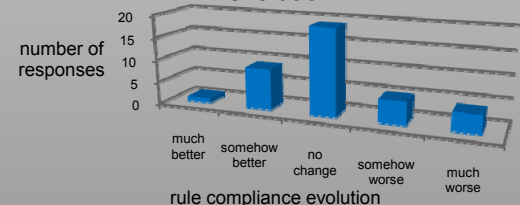
1. I started by collecting some data about the number and type of rule violation during a month;
2. Then 1 of 4 design principles was enforced, regarding this specific field: visibility;
3. The same kind of collection performed in 1. was done during a month after visibility principle enforcement;
4. Finally, a survey about how rule compliance evolved was responded by 46 members.

Results

Rule violations before and after the visibility increase



Opinion about the rule compliance evolution



Discussion and conclusion

Results suggest that some improvements were achieved, because people started talking about this issue and the violation rate decreased. Even so, members didn't note a great evolution. They also suggested several additional measures to address this problem, and surprise: those suggestions are all about the other 3 principles that help improve behavior. Members believe, and I agree, that sanctions should be stronger or at least have more visibility in order to set examples to all community. About this study itself I must say that associating quantitative and qualitative methods was very helpful.