

L33T PHREAKS AND POWER  
SELLERS:  
LOCATING STATUS IN SOCIAL  
MEDIA

Alice Marwick | New York University

# What is status?

- A position in society, conferring rights and obligations upon a person as a citizen within a political community (Turner 1988)
- ...a structure of relations of perceived, and in some degree accepted, social superiority, equality and inferiority among individuals that reflects not their personal qualities but rather the degree of 'social honor' attaching to certain of their positional or perhaps purely ascribed attributes (e.g. 'birth' or ethnicity) (Chan & Goldthorpe 2007)

# The Social and the Technical

- Computerization: Kling & Iacono, 1996
- “...computerization movements focus on changing an objectionable situation or improving the circumstances of a group that suffers a social disadvantage. The leaders of computerization movements develop and offer a utopian social vision, in which the impact of computerization leads to strongly beneficial results for the wider society in which computer systems are placed.” Pfaffenberger 1996

# Web 2.0 as Utopian Vision

- Must analyze community norms, practices, mores
- Understand how inequality is created and maintained
  - Who gets to speak?
  - What technologies are emphasized?
- How does the development of the technology affect status hierarchies?

# Status in a community of practice

- All status is inherently relative, hierarchical, and therefore located
- Every community has a status structure
- Community of Practice: Lave & Wenger 1992
  - ▣ Defined by community-specific variables
  - ▣ Participation in a particular set of social practices
  - ▣ Learned
- “Taste Cultures” : Gans 1999

# Status: Ascribed vs. Achieved

- Ascribed: person has no control over
  - ▣ Variables like age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, language
- Achieved: person has control over (to certain extent)
  - ▣ Variables like education, job, wealth, possessions



# Status in Early Social Media

- How does this media/technology constitute a Community of Practice?
- What mechanisms are available for status display?
- What practices are considered high-status or low-status?
- How is social hierarchy created or maintained?

# USENET groups

 <p><b>comp.*</b></p>	 <p><b>humanities.*</b></p>	 <p><b>misc.*</b></p>
 <p><b>news.*</b></p>	 <p><b>alt.*</b></p>	 <p><b>rec.*</b></p>
 <p><b>sci.*</b></p>	 <p><b>soc.*</b></p>	 <p><b>talk.*</b></p>

# Chat Rooms / IRC



A screenshot of a web browser window titled "AjaxChat - Mozilla Firefox". The address bar shows the URL: `http://192.168.123.100:8080/ajaxchat/joinRoom.do?name=Television`. The main content area displays a chat log for a room named "Television".

**You are now chatting in Television**

[4/17/06 11:57 PM] FrankZ: Tonight in the Television chat room, we discuss who would win in a space battle, Captain James T. Kirk and the Starship Enterprise, or Captain John J. Sheridan and the White Star.  
[4/17/06 11:57 PM] JamesKirk: Well, clearly I would win, as my ship is much more powerful.  
[4/17/06 11:57 PM] JohnSheridan: Oh, on the contrary my good captain the White Star is a living entity, capable of self-repair and adaptation to all varieties of energy weapons.  
[4/17/06 11:58 PM] JamesKirk: Well, that is a fair point Captain Sheridan. However, as a living entity, it is logical to assume that your White Star is also capable of dying, is it not?  
[4/17/06 11:58 PM] JohnSheridan: Yes, I suppose I would have to concede that point. However, the White Star is far more menueverable than your Enterprise.  
[4/17/06 11:59 PM] FrankZ: Some fantastic points being raised by both Captains this evening folks!

On the right side, a list of users is visible: FrankZ, JamesKirk, and JohnSheridan.

At the bottom, there is a control panel with the following elements:

- Buttons: **Leave Room**, **Clear History**
- Color selection: **Your color:** (dropdown menu showing "Black"), **Their color:** (dropdown menu showing "Dodger Blue")
- Font size: A label "Font size:" followed by two magnifying glass icons.
- Input field: A large text area for typing messages.
- Send button: A button labeled **Send**.

The status bar at the bottom left shows "Done".

# MUDs and Textual Games

Your Bedroom

Vespers

The plague came. And now we suffer.

## Vespers

(First time players should type ABOUT)

Release 1 / Serial number 051128 / Inform v6.30 Library 6/11

Six crisp chimes mark Vespers. Your heart flutters for a moment, and you place your head in your hands.

## Your Bedroom

Your room is small; it is the same as all the others, but it seems smaller of late. With so many of your brothers gone, there has been little for you to do but wait. Wait for the spots to appear in this tiny, dark room.

A chill breeze spins in through the window and out the door to the west.

Your old desk is pushed up against one side. It sags but holds itself up proudly.

Against the other side is your bed, the blanket wrapped up in itself from this morning.

> █

# Status in Web 2.0: Reputation

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Excellent code-by-example book**, July 10, 2005

Reviewer: **HubbiDad** (Apex, NC USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

Kirk McElhearn's "The Mac OS X Command Line: Unix Under the Hood" recommended this book shell scripting deeper (along with a Perl book) and I'm glad he did. There's a lot of ground Dave the 101 scripts are surprisingly helpful for day-to-day usage and computer management. As Mr. quality of the scripts in this book far surpass what you might find after spending a lot of time Go your platform. He understands the differences of the various platforms and how you should tweak a lively writing style (particularly for a computer book).

This is one of those rare reference books that really needs to be on the reference shelf.

Was this review helpful to you?   ([Report this](#))

## Opinions Most Helpful Reviews



### [Compass Folding Adjustable Ultimate Booster - Larger Child? This Booster may just be THE ONE!](#)

Compass Folding Adjustable Ultimate Booster - Misty Morning CB530MMO

Reviewed by [marytara](#) (POPULAR AUTHOR) - [Top 50](#)

Author's rating: ★★★★★

We've tried our fair share of booster seats over the years. My son is 6 years old, 50 some-odd pounds and 48" tall. While many of his peers are no longer using a booster seat, they should be. A booster seat

[Read Reviews](#)

[Write Reviews](#)

[Compare prices for Compass Folding Adjustable Ultimate Booster - Misty Morning CB530MMO](#)

[Compare prices for Compass Folding Adjustable Ultimate Booster - Misty Morning CB530MMO](#)

- + excellent buy first class
- + 1a thanks +++++
- + Speedy delivery. Well packaged. Great Comms. Great seller. A+++++
- + Promptly despatched, could be useful info for guitarists.
- + disc arrived yesterday - many thanks
- + A great insight into the guitar trade & selling on ebay Cheers Andy A+++++
- + great seller! product as promised and quick delivery ++++++
- + Got my CD very quickly with unexpected extra FREE stuff! Cheers.
- + BRILLIANT PRODUCT AST DELIVERY SUPERB EBAYER!! A+++++
- + Excellent ebayer, a pleasure to do business with.

142

diggs

## [Major League Baseball's DRM change strikes out with fans](#)

arstechnica.com — Major League Baseball has apparently switched DRM clearinghouses. As a result, some fans are stuck with DRMed footage that they purchased, but are unable to watch because their licenses can't be verified. [More...](#) (Baseball)

[digg it](#)



13 Comments



Share



Bury



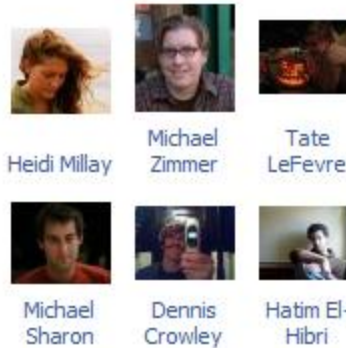
verge — made popular 30 min ago

# Status in Web 2.0: Status Symbols?



## NYU Friends

20 friends at NYU. [See All](#)



## Friends in Other Networks

### Networks with the most friends

New York, NY (37)  
 San Francisco, CA (24)  
 Seattle, WA (23)  
 NYU (20)  
 Washington (14)  
 Wellesley (12)  
 Carnegie Mellon (5)

### Networks you belong to

NYU (20)

## Compare People

by Chaihn Inc.

Share +

Continue comparing

- All questions
- Work related
- Personal
- Dating
- School related

- more likely to win in a fight
- am I more jealous of a better laugh
- a better profile picture
- a better sense of humor
- better taste in music
- better dancer
- better friend
- better listener
- braver
- funnier
- kinder
- more adventurous
- more artistic
- more athletic
- cooler
- more creative
- more fashionable
- more likely to do a favor for me
- more loyal
- more popular
- more talkative

Where Do I Fit | Inner Circle | Silicon Valley, CA | Hall of Fame

## Who is a better dancer

Rankings in your inner friend circle.  
 NOTE: Deserved/Not deserved feedback is anonymous.

Rank	Name	Wins
1	<b>Komal Sethi</b> not deserved	5 (71%)
2	<b>Paige Phares</b> deserved / not deserved	4 (80%)
3	<b>Ivko Maksimovic</b>	7 (44%)

**Komal Sethi** comment: "he looks like one of those crazy dancers. I guess this is deserved ranking." [Post](#) [delete](#)

**Paige Phares** comment: "Does the best Serbian dances I've seen." [Reply](#) [delete](#)

**Ivko Maksimovic** comment: "I'm-not-here" [Post](#) [delete](#)



# Where next?

Email

Address

Password

[Sign In](#)

[Forgot your password?](#)

We welcome business travellers from the [Dopplr 100](#) or [MBA 100](#).

Dopplr is currently in private beta and membership is by invitation only. Read more at [our blog](#).

Interested in joining? [Tell us here](#).

# Implications

- Claims of “democracy” and “equality” must be interrogated
- Understand relationships between technological features and how social hierarchies are created and maintained
- Understand the hierarchy of the technology industry