

Louvain School of Management

Are the key digital tools used by fashion luxury brands well optimized today?

A comparative analysis between Louis Vuitton,
Hermès, and Gucci.

Author : Lindsay Van Regemorter
Supervisor(s) : Isabelle Schuiling
Academic year 2019-2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Prof. Isabelle Schuiling for her guidance throughout the whole process of this master thesis, her availability when I needed feedback, and her always constructive and insightful comments, all this enabling me to progress effectively. Mrs. Schuiling's deep knowledge in digital marketing as well as in the luxury industry specifically, made it possible for me to study the subject I am passionate about and for this I warmly thank her. Lastly, I wish to thank her for the autonomy she gave me while always making sure that I would, in the end, provide the best possible version of this thesis.

Second, I would like to thank Heurjonie Lembi Bonheur, Stéphanie Verzar, Grian Lanaud-Harding, Francesco Mendolia, and Hugo Spitaleri for accepting to be the five participants of the usability testing I conducted. Their availability and insightful comments enabled me to add exterior opinions to my rigorous analysis.

Thirdly, I would like to express my profound gratefulness to my family and friends for their support, not only during the completion of this thesis, but throughout my whole university career. They supported me, lifted me up in harder times and always encouraged me to give the best of myself.

Fourthly, I am grateful towards the Louvain School of Management and especially towards the CEMS program for the excellent academic input they provided us with as well as the determination to excel, innovate and challenge ourselves that they taught us during those two years of Master degree.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: WHY IS THIS SUBJECT INTERESTING?	1
CHAPTER 2: PURPOSE OF THE THESIS AND RESEARCH QUESTION	3
PART 1: LITERATURE REVIEW	4
CHAPTER 1: LUXURY	4
SECTION 1: DEFINITION OF LUXURY	4
SECTION 2: LUXURY AND FASHION.....	6
SECTION 3: LUXURY CUSTOMERS.....	7
SECTION 4: CHALLENGES OF LUXURY BRAND COMMUNICATION	9
SECTION 5: LUXURY AND DIGITAL.....	10
CHAPTER 2: DIGITAL MARKETING	11
SECTION 1: DEFINITION OF DIGITAL MARKETING	11
SECTION 2: WEBSITE ANALYSIS	12
2.1. OVERALL PERFORMANCE	13
2.2. USABILITY	13
2.3. E-SERVICE QUALITY	16
SECTION 3: SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING (SEM).....	18
3.1. SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)	18
3.1.1. ON-PAGE OPTIMIZATION.....	19
3.1.2. BACKLINKS.....	23
SECTION 4: SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING (SMM)	23
4.1. INSTAGRAM.....	25
4.2. TWITTER.....	26
4.3. FACEBOOK.....	27
PART 2: CASE STUDIES	28
CHAPTER 1: LOUIS VUITTON	28
SECTION 1: TARGETING AND POSITIONING	28
SECTION 2: FOUNDATION AND OWNERSHIP	29
SECTION 3: LVMH	29
SECTION 4: FINANCIAL INFORMATION	29
CHAPTER 2: HERMÈS.....	30
SECTION 1: TARGETING AND POSITIONING	30
SECTION 2: FOUNDATION AND OWNERSHIP	30
SECTION 3: FINANCIAL INFORMATION	31
CHAPTER 3: GUCCI.....	31
SECTION 1: TARGETING AND POSITIONING	31
SECTION 2: FOUNDATION AND OWNERSHIP	32
SECTION 3: KERING	32

SECTION 4: FINANCIAL INFORMATION	32
PART 3: METHODOLOGY	33
PART 4: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS.....	36
CHAPTER 1: WEBSITE ANALYSIS.....	36
SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF WEBSITES' PERFORMANCE, SOURCES OF TRAFFIC, AND USERS	36
1.1. TRAFFIC AND INTERACTIONS	36
1.2. MARKETING CHANNELS	38
1.3. DEMOGRAPHICS	38
SECTION 2: USABILITY	39
SECTION 3: E-SERVICE QUALITY	44
CHAPTER 2: SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION	54
CHAPTER 3: SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING.....	59
SECTION 1: SOCIAL STATS	60
SECTION 2: ANALYSIS OF THE OFFICIAL INSTAGRAM, FACEBOOK, AND TWITTER ACCOUNTS	62
2.1. INSTAGRAM.....	63
2.2. FACEBOOK.....	66
2.3. TWITTER.....	67
CHAPTER 4: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	68
SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF WEBSITES' PERFORMANCE, SOURCES OF TRAFFIC, AND USERS	68
SECTION 2: USABILITY	68
SECTION 3: E-SERVICE QUALITY	69
SECTION 4: SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION	72
4.1. ON-PAGE OPTIMIZATION – PART 1	72
4.2. ON-PAGE OPTIMIZATION – PART 2: CRITERIA FOR A MOBILE RESPONSIVE WEBSITE	72
SECTION 5: SOCIAL MEDIA.....	73
PART 5: CONCLUSION.....	76
CHAPTER 1: GENERAL CONCLUSION	76
CHAPTER 2: LIMITS.....	78
CHAPTER 3: FUTURE RESEARCH.....	79
BIBLIOGRAPHY	81
APPENDIX.....	92

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: WHY IS THIS SUBJECT INTERESTING?

Firstly, the luxury market constitutes a significant economic force for Europe; it is large and growing (BCG, 2018). Indeed, the luxury market grew by 4% in 2019 to reach approximately €1.3 trillion globally with a record high of €281 billion for the personal luxury goods market¹ (see Appendix 1). This growing trend of the industry is especially due to the Asia-Pacific region (mainland China, Southeast Asia, Japan) which experienced sustained growth while Europe, the Americas, and the rest of the world performed a more modest growth (Bain&Company, 2020). Concerning the actors, France is dominating the global luxury market; in fact, on financial markets, luxury represents a significative part of the market capitalization of the CAC 40². France comprises the flagships of the luxury industry: the KHOLC, namely Kering, Hermès, L'Oréal Luxe, LVMH, and Chanel became the French GAFAM³, which represent, along with SMCP SAS, Longchamp SAS, and Zadig & Voltaire (Deloitte, 2019), 23.5% of the global turnover (Hanania, Musnik, & Gaillochet, 2019). Italy represents the other force of the luxury industry with 14% of worldwide turnover. However, a lot of the Italian jewels were brought under the French flag; Kering is the French group that owns the most Italian luxury Houses including Gucci (Hanania, Musnik, & Gaillochet, 2019, p. 26). Last but not least, it has been estimated that the global luxury customer base will expand up to 450 million, from the 390 million it was counting in 2019. This trend is mainly due to the growing middle class, and once again, especially from Asia (Bain&Company, 2020).

Secondly, the digital disruption is changing the game for luxury companies. In fact, by 2025, nearly $\frac{1}{5}$ of luxury sales will happen online (McKinsey&Company, 2018) demonstrating the undeniable opportunity in e-commerce. Contrary to the pervasive belief about the skepticism to shop for luxury goods online, it has been reported that “luxury shoppers are willing to purchase luxury goods online at full price” (Kim & Kim, 2018) as they “now consider the Internet as a legitimate and trustworthy channel for purchasing luxury goods” (McKinsey & Company, 2015). Expectedly, this shifting in shopping behavior will drive the luxury e-

¹ Luxury good market: drinks, fashion, cosmetics, fragrances, watches, jewelry, luggage and handbags (O'Connell, 2020).

² CAC 40 = Cotation Assistée en Continu: basket composed of 40 values of French companies chosen between 100 French companies for which the volume of stock exchange is the most important (La finance pour tous, 2019).

³ GAFAM = Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple, Microsoft (La finance pour tous, 2019).

commerce to grow to 25% by 2025 (Kim & Kim, 2018). But the greater impact of digital is its actual influence on luxury sales: in fact, 80% of luxury sales are digitally influenced today. Customers are first looking for advice and/or suggestions from online resources such as trusted influencers before actually making a purchase decision (McKinsey&Company, 2018). It can be stated that “digital technology is probably one of the best things to happen to luxury brands in a long time” (BCG, 2016). Indeed, it opens the door to an immense panel of opportunities in terms of personalization of offers as well as services and births of new channels to communicate (BCG, 2016). Moreover, luxury brands now have to answer to a younger panel of customers, highly digital and mobile-oriented that will make up to 130% of market growth between 2019 and 2025 (Bain&Company, 2019). There is nowadays an obvious emergency to achieve an efficient e-commerce and engaging and exciting interactions on social media (BCG, 2016). In fact, Delvaux, the oldest leatherwork House in the world, just recently took the leap and launched its own e-commerce platform on the 17th of April 2020, after the CEO, Marco Probst, realized that even for a traditional luxury House such as Delvaux, an online store had become a necessity today (Delvaux ouvre sa propre boutique en ligne, 2020).

The motivation behind the choice of the subject of this thesis is the following: digital has become an unprecedented necessity for luxury companies to prosper in the new digital era. Although most luxury brands have adapted their business model, some of them are still lagging behind in the understanding and applying of digital technologies (BCG, 2016). More precisely, there is a large lack of spread knowledge on how to proceed to create a successful e-commerce platform for luxury companies (Kim & Kim, 2018) and the hard reality of the ubiquity of information and the uncontrollable brand advocacy happening online constitute a whole new challenge inherent to the web world (BCG, 2016). This is why, implementing a strong omnichannel⁴ marketing strategy seamlessly integrating online and offline channels is imperative (Kim & Kim, 2018), as well as maintaining consistent communication everywhere, at any time (McKinsey&Company, 2015).

The choice of this thesis is also motivated by the personal interest I have in the luxury industry on the one hand, and in digital marketing on the other hand. I have developed over the years a deep fascination for the luxury sector and I strongly aspire to building my career around it. Moreover, I have followed two digital marketing classes at the Louvain School of Management

⁴ “The “omnichannel” shopper is an evolution of the multichannel consumer who instead of using channels in parallel, he uses them all simultaneously” (Lazaris & Vrechopoulos, 2014).

(Belgium) and one at University College Dublin (Ireland) which deepened my interest in the matter and broadened my knowledge.

CHAPTER 2: PURPOSE OF THE THESIS AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The purpose of the thesis is twofold. To begin with, it intends to evaluate if fashion luxury brands overcame the inevitable digital disruption they are facing today; in fact, two trends are pressuring the luxury industry to evolve regarding their consideration of the place of digital inside the luxury world, which is characterized by authenticity, tradition and heritage. First, a vast majority of luxury shoppers are now influenced by what they saw on the internet, and shopping behaviors are dramatically changing and allowing the Internet to emerge as a new important retail channel, and second, a new generation of young tech savvy shoppers are surfacing as luxury customers. Therefore, it is imperative for luxury brands to shift from a traditional marketing program to a digitally optimized program seamlessly integrating both their offline and online channels into their marketing plan. The objective is therefore to evaluate the optimization of the key digital tools of luxury fashion brands to allow them to offer the best online experience to their new (and old) panel of customers.

Then, this thesis aims at understanding the differences that could arise in the optimization of the digital tools of three of the flagship Houses of the luxury industry, namely Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci, all three direct competitors of one another.

Therefore, the research question developed to meet these aforementioned objectives is the following:

“Are the key digital tools used by fashion luxury brands well optimized today?

A comparative analysis between Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci”

The objective stemming from this research question is to look for free online analytical tools as well as to find and to create frameworks that would give us the ability to provide a thorough analysis of the digital tools of the three luxury fashion brands, Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci without having any privileged access from these companies.

PART 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

Before analyzing the digital marketing tools of Louis Vuitton, Hermès and Gucci, it is important to clarify the theoretical concepts that will help us conducting the analysis and understanding their key strengths and weak spots. The Chapter 1 of the literature review will focus on the concept of luxury, by first attempting to provide a definition of the latter and by confronting it to the concept of fashion. Thereafter, a description of the luxury customers will be provided to understand who composes the current luxury customer base. This chapter on luxury will close with an insight on the challenges of brand communication and with a section on the emergence of digital in the luxury industry. The Chapter 2 of the literature review will concern digital marketing; a theoretical examination of the main components of this field will be carried out, with respect to the luxury industry when applicable. This chapter will thus comprise theory on the necessary website components to achieve an optimized usability and e-commerce, on search engine marketing with a special focus on search engine optimization, to end with social media marketing.

CHAPTER 1: LUXURY

SECTION 1: DEFINITION OF LUXURY

Gabrielle Coco Chanel (1883-1971) defined luxury as “*a necessity that begins where necessity ends*”. Indeed, luxury goods do “exist at one end of a continuum with ordinary goods”, but where the ordinary ends and how the concept of necessity is considered is just a matter of perception from customers (Tynan, McKechnie, & Chhuon, 2010). What luxury represents for some today, may not be the same as for others, and might not even be considered as luxury tomorrow (Som & Blanckaert, 2015). To date, these challenges inherent to the relative concept of luxury remain unsolved and existing literature still fails to provide a universally approved definition of luxury (Ko, Costello, & Taylor, 2019). Heine’s reflected that “from about 20 years ago until today, there is above all a consensus in business literature that there is actually no consensus about the definition of luxury products and brands” (Heine, 2012). However, these definitions hold one commonality: they incorporate a series of dimensions used to define a luxury brand, which have been argued to be consistent across years (Ko, Costello, & Taylor, 2019). The elements that have been identified to be essential to the definition of a luxury brand are in the number of five:

“A luxury brand is a branded product or service that consumers perceive to

- 1) be high quality;*
- 2) offer authentic value via desired benefits, whether functional or emotional;*
- 3) have a prestigious image within the market built on qualities such as artisanship, craftsmanship, or service quality;*
- 4) be worthy of commanding a premium price; and*
- 5) be capable of inspiring a deep connection, resonance, with the consumer” (Vinerean & Opreana, 2019).*

The concept of “luxury” is relatively new; all the activities that we now include in the luxury sector were perceived as completely distinct as much concerning the manufacturing part of the process than the distribution concerns and so, were represented by different federations. Nonetheless, French people realized that a bottle of champagne and an elegant dress had something in common; therefore, the Comité Colbert, organization destined to promote the concept of luxury, was created in 1954 (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2015). Nowadays, the luxury world comprises nine sectors, each holding relative specificities and key success factors: personal luxury goods (1), luxury cars (2), luxury hospitality (3), fine wines & spirits (4), gourmet food & fine dining (5), high-end furniture & housewares (6), fine art (7), private jets & yachts (8), and luxury cruises (9). This thesis will focus specifically on personal luxury goods, which can be considered as the “core of the core” of the luxury segments. The market for personal luxury goods experienced a 4% growth in 2019, representing a record high at €281 billion. Concerning the subcategories of the personal luxury goods segment, the outperformers were both the shoes and jewelry recording a growth of 9%, closely followed by leather goods with a growth of 7% (Bain&Company, 2020).

What exactly makes a good, a luxury item? Michel Chevalier & Gérald Mazzalovo provided a comprehensive answer to that question. They argued that a luxury item has to meet three criteria: a strong artistic content, the result of traditional craftsmanship and an international dimension (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2015, p. 7).

- The artistic dimension is the essence of the luxury market. A luxury item is more than an item, it is an object that has been created under a careful process of refined esthetic research. Indeed, the artistic components of the offering as a whole (the product, the wrapping, the advertising concept) have to be specifically strong because customers buy objects and expect every element of these objects to be magnificent (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2015, pp. 7-8).

- The craftsmanship aspect is also very important as luxury customers firmly wish to believe they are buying an object coming straight out of the hands of an artisan in the designer's workshop (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2015, p. 8).
- Finally, the international dimension. Luxury brands must have an international presence while at the same time preserve the discernable national character of the brand. Those beautiful hand-made objects manufactured by talented designers have to be seen and acknowledged by the world before customers decide to buy them in their country or abroad. Therefore, in the luxury industry, it is almost impossible to exist without having a presence in the big cities such as Paris, Milan, New York, Honk-Kong, Shanghai and many others (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2015, pp. 8-9).

However, the value of a luxury good is a relative concept. "Luxury goods are the one specific kind of commodity which consumers expect it can bring more experience value than the use value of it" (Du, 2017) but the value that can be realized differs according to the perception of the customer (Du, 2017). Depending on the society's state of development (technological advance, civilization process), on the economic resources of an individual (Maman Larraufie & Kourdoughli, 2014), and even on personal preferences, there cannot be a widely accepted understanding of the meaning of a luxury good (Du, 2017), as "what is superficial and expensive for one individual may be mere comfort for another one" (Maman Larraufie & Kourdoughli, 2014). Jean-Louis Dumas, chairman of Hermès, argued that "*luxury can be very simple, for example, staying 15 minutes longer in bed*" (cited in Forbes India, 2013).

SECTION 2: LUXURY AND FASHION

"*Fashion is the area of activity that involves styles of clothing and appearance*" (Collins English Dictionary, n.d.) and "*A fashion is a style of clothing or a way of behaving that is popular at a particular time*" (Collins English Dictionary, n.d.). Fashion is tied to the rhythm of the seasons and the fluctuations of time while luxury is characterized by a certain stability and timelessness (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009): indeed, at the beginning, a fashion brand will have to be creative and bring a new panel of ideas, concepts and products every season to capture the customer's attention. Then, for its status to evolve to "luxury", the brand will have to develop a range of "timeless" iconic pieces that will represent the brand's personal style and identity. Those models, such as the iconic Kelly bag of Hermès or the Brillant bag of Delvaux, will become the best-sellers and will always be sold regardless of the other products' sales

results (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2015, pp. 4-5), whereas previous years' fashion will grow to lose value and be sold at a lower price online. The overlap of the concepts of luxury and fashion is only successful when there is a tandem arrangement made of a brand (luxury side of the tandem) and a creator (fashion side of the tandem); the best example we could cite was the one of Chanel and Karl Lagerfeld (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009).

SECTION 3: LUXURY CUSTOMERS

In luxury, there are no products, only particular objects that people desire. Therefore, it would be incorrect to talk about luxury customers as “consumers” as they do not consume a product but wish to acquire an object and then keep it. The customer acquires highly symbolic objects in special circumstances and does it in a special state of mind. Even repetitive purchases remain exceptional events with an emotional signification attached to it (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2015, p. 157). In fact, “luxury should have a very strong personal and hedonistic component, otherwise it is no longer luxury but simple snobbery” as it would mean that people buy luxury objects just because of a paradigm that others would impose on them, instead of satisfying their own inner taste and pleasure (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009).

Nowadays, luxury brands have to answer to a more digital and innovative panel of customers, with the smartphone as the powerful instrument with a strong need of information and instant purchase (Hanania, Musnik, & Gaillochet, 2019, p. 13; 71). Luxury customers are highly digital, mobile-oriented, and social and therefore develop great expectations for what they desire in their shopping experience (McKinsey&Company, 2015). Millennials, or Generation Y⁵ accounting for 35% of consumption in 2019, could make up to 45% of the luxury customer base in 2025, representing the most engaged of all luxury brands followers (Bain&Company, 2020). Yet, the younger Generation Z⁶ is the one that will reshape the industry: accounting for only 4% of luxury purchases today, they could make up 40% by 2035 (Bain&Company, 2020). Now, this Generation Z represents about 30% of the world population (Hanania, Musnik, & Gaillochet, 2019, p. 76), and already constitute a growing part of luxury consumption in Asian markets (Bain&Company, 2020). Connected on a permanent basis, they navigate on 4.4 different platforms in average. They are obsessed by their image and by looking good, which they massively expose on social media (Hanania, Musnik, & Gaillochet, 2019, p. 76). Together,

⁵ Millennials or Generation Y: people born between 1980 and 1997 (Hanania, Musnik, & Gaillochet, 2019).

⁶ Generation Z: people born between 1998 and 2019 (Hanania, Musnik, & Gaillochet, 2019).

generation Y and Z will contribute to 130% of market growth between 2019 and 2025 (Bain&Company, 2019). But a particularity of the luxury industry is that nearly all shoppers own smartphones (98%), in comparison to 65% of the general population, so let us keep in mind that e.g. baby boomers⁷ also embraced enthusiastically the digital lifestyle (McKinsey&Company, 2018).

The luxury customers delivering the majority of the market growth are the Chinese people. Indeed, they accounted for “90% of the global market growth in 2019, reaching 35% of the value of luxury goods sold in the world” (Bain&Company, 2020) and are expected to account for 40% of the world’s spending on luxury goods by 2025 (McKinsey & Company, 2019). This trend is due to the rising living standards of Chinese citizen’s driving consumption levels to increase (Du, 2017). Consequently, China has witnessed an explosion of the upper-middle-class which will experience a compound annual growth rate of 28% from 2018 to 2025. This new driving force of the luxury sector in China is mostly composed of the post-‘80s/’90s generation, mapping mostly the Generation Y (McKinsey & Company, 2019). To date, almost all the of the leading international luxury brands have entered the Chinese market and view it as one of the most promising market worldwide (Liang, Ghosh, & Oe, 2017). Young Chinese customers view ownership and association to luxury brands as more than “something to wear”, but as a form of lifestyle that will take them to reach a social status of distinction and exclusiveness. That newly formed community is immersed in a digital world where they are constantly looking for the latest trends and information on the luxury world, making them highly exposed to digital influence in their customer journey (McKinsey & Company, 2019).

“Clients are morphing from a mere audience to luxury brands, to critical center-stage actors who want to interact, converse, share, observe and judge brands” (Bain&Company, 2020). The emotions of this new panel of customers evolved and are now diverse, global and opinionated. This is why brands will have to switch to a new model enabling them to connect with customers in an extremely personal way and answer to the ever-evolving needs concerning the purchasing and communicating processes (Bain&Company, 2020).

⁷ Baby-boomers: people born between 1946 and 1960 (Hanania, Musnik, & Gaillochet, 2019).

SECTION 4: CHALLENGES OF LUXURY BRAND COMMUNICATION

First, there is an explosion in brand communications nowadays: we live in a world where communication in all its forms is everywhere and is growing exponentially. So, it is not surprising for brands to be at the heart of the contemporary life. Brand communication influences our judgments about products and people and our buying decisions (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2015, pp. 139-140). In fact, when one considers brands in today's society, the first idea that comes to mind is not the quality of the products it manufactures but the intensity of the message they convey to the public (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2015, p. 139). Luxury shoppers, and particularly those belonging to the new generations (Y and Z) are not only interested by the characteristics of the products but more by the imaginary world that brands help them create in their minds, that become entirely theirs (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2015, p. 164). According to François-Henri Pinault, CEO of Kering, *"we are facing a generation where the emotional component is very strong. The traditional speech, the heritage, the artisanal know-how, it's good, but it doesn't speak to the emotion that is predominant in this age group"* (Hanania, Musnik, & Gaillochet, 2019). Hence, emotion is today essential in the luxury shopping process and will be a major challenge for the majority of luxury marketing professionals (Hanania, Musnik, & Gaillochet, 2019, p. 18). The key is to build the dream and the dream is the connection between the customer and the brand (Som & Blanckaert, 2015).

Second, the luxury market is today based on a paradox. On the one hand, luxury appears as only accessible to a small lucky part of the population, but on the other hand, those luxury brands are now linked to a logic of mass production, distribution, and communication. So how can you produce an image of uniqueness if the items are manufactured in thousands of pieces and advertised on media turned to mass? To try and resolve this, luxury brands must work on their positioning through innovative distribution and marketing strategies (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2015, p. 12). Indeed, having a compelling story to share and creating brand advocacy is essential and will be achieved through the powerful tools of digital, source of immense growth. Data is leveraged by brands to build customer intimacy and seize opportunities to tailor emerging customer preferences into new products (McKinsey&Company, 2018).

SECTION 5: LUXURY AND DIGITAL

Amongst high-end luxury companies, a common understanding used to be that taking part in an e-commerce activity was restricted to the lower and middle range of products. The rationale behind this shared wisdom was that luxury customers would not buy expensive items online, but instead would always choose personalized and tactile in-store experience (McKinsey&Company, 2014). Moreover, brands were wondering how to reconcile a distribution platform and communication networks defined by counter-luxury characteristics while avoiding damaging the brands' identity and spirit of luxury (Maman Larraufie & Kourdoughli, 2014). Indeed, as luxury brands are linked to a logic of exclusivity and exceptional service quality, it brings up a challenge in the era of digital where human interactions are limited. As "the Internet is now the second most important customer contact point for luxury fashion goods" (Kim & Kim, 2018), and that "almost 40% of all luxury goods purchasing choices are impacted by what consumers see online" (Kim & Kim, 2018), the fear of losing the opportunity to show off the exquisite and uniqueness of luxury products arose. So, the question was not about whether they should go online but how to successfully become digital-oriented without harming the luxury brand image. Indeed, communication on digital platforms is more turned to mass than to selection, thus, the sharing of information on the internet could not only lead to a loss of prestige but also of image control considering the potential distorted reuse of their stories (Maman Larraufie & Kourdoughli, 2014). It follows that "designers and luxury Houses must find a balance between traditions and the power exercised by the new technologies and social networks, which open up new and enormous possibilities for the consumer" (Escobar, 2016).

Luxury companies are today acknowledging the essential role that the Internet holds in influencing luxury shoppers' purchasing decisions for example via a "buzz" on social media that will lead to in-store purchase or through an online research that will subsequently lead to an online purchase on an e-commerce platform (McKinsey&Company, 2014). Digital marketing is a necessary tool in order to remain competitive in a society characterized by movement, fluidity and easy access to information everywhere and at any time. However, despite the growing understanding of the advantages of owning an enhanced website and well-developed online communities, it has been, and still is for some luxury brands, a challenge along a slow adaptation process (Escobar, 2016).

CHAPTER 2: DIGITAL MARKETING

SECTION 1: DEFINITION OF DIGITAL MARKETING

From a concept identified in the 1990s with the sole purpose of advertising to customers, to a broader field with the appearance of “mobile technologies” in the 2000s and “social media” technologies around 2010, digital marketing shifted towards the search of never-ending customer engagement supported by the use of tools indispensable for business competence (Behera, Gunasekaran, Gupta, Kamboj, & Bala, 2020). Today, digital marketing can be defined as “*achieving marketing objectives through applying digital media, data and technology*” (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 9). This definition helps understand that it is the results obtained by all those technologies that should guide the choices and investments in digital marketing and not the opposite (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 9).

In practice, companies have to manage many different forms of online media to offer users the total digital experience: we can list the company website, mobile app(s), social media company pages as well as their online communication techniques encompassing search engine marketing, online public relations, online partnerships (including affiliate marketing and co-marketing) online display advertising, opt-in email marketing and social media marketing. The objective behind using these online techniques is to provide the best service to existing customers and to attract prospect customers so as to develop a strong customer relationship and brand image (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 9; 28).

An omnichannel online presence for luxury brands is necessary as consumers are extremely visual and dynamic (Escobar, 2016). Over the last decade, luxury fashion brands have started putting an emphasis on the development of their social media presence considering the significant influence they now hold over purchasing decisions, as well as on the improvement of their websites, considering the expected growth of e-commerce for luxury goods in the coming years (Escobar, 2016) (Kim & Kim, 2018). What is more, a growing number of luxury brands are investing in search engine marketing as organic search represents “the most significant source of traffic” for luxury brand’s websites, with Google as the dominant search engine (Beauloye, 2019).

Hence, this thesis will only focus on some of the aspects comprised in digital marketing described hereabove, namely an analysis of the website, followed by a section on search engine marketing, to end with social media marketing.

SECTION 2: WEBSITE ANALYSIS

In spite of the growing importance of social media, the company website must still be placed at the center of online communication strategies and be made effective for users to access it via not only desktops, but also smartphones and tablet devices. Creating an efficient website should be top priority as users are looking primarily for convenience; they want a quick to download website, which is well-structured and easy to navigate on (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 287; 290). This is why we will pay particular attention to website usability and develop a series of criteria that websites should follow in order to increase traffic and therefore conversion rate⁸.

Websites became an indispensable strategic complement of the communication and sales of luxury items; “shopping intent increases as users spend time on the net, and the interest for a brand increases as users detect a good performance of their website” (Escobar, 2016). In fact, a customer’s encounter with the website of a brand is a major determinant in the perception of that brand (McKinsey&Company, 2015). Websites are denominated of “high content” when they display comprehensive information about the brand such as its history and heritage and other relevant data of interest (Escobar, 2016), and they must deliver an ease to navigation that fills user’s already well established expectations (McKinsey&Company, 2015). In fact, customers are more inclined to navigate and purchase products from a website showing extraordinarily desirable qualities. What is more, as “luxury e-commerce consists of 8% of total luxury sales” (Kim & Kim, 2018), and as “it is expected to grow to 25% by 2025” (Kim & Kim, 2018), providing an excellent online shopping experience is a strategic imperative for these companies. However, luxury brands lack good practices on how to implement a quality e-commerce platform. Jung-Hwan Kim & Minjeong Kim conducted a study on the necessary requirements for the implementation of a quality e-service for luxury fashion brands to make the feeling of exclusivity apparent on the website and reflected in e-service (Kim & Kim, 2018) which will hold a central role in the analysis of the websites.

⁸ Conversion rate: “your conversion rate is the percentage of visitors to your website that complete a desired goal (a conversion) out of the total number of visitors. A high conversion rate is indicative of successful marketing and web design” (Wordstream, n.d.), e.g. complete a purchase for e-commerce websites.

2.1. OVERALL PERFORMANCE

To evaluate the overall performance of the website, it is interesting to look at a few metrics. Concerning traffic, it is relevant to measure total number of visits, monthly visits, and unique visitors per month⁹ to get an idea on the popularity of each website. Regarding interactions, the number of pages consulted per visit, the bounce rate¹⁰ (this concept will be further detailed in the section 3.1. *Search Engine Optimization*) and the time spent on site (this concept will be further detailed in the section 3.1. *Search Engine Optimization*) are interesting metrics to consider as they suggest the degree of optimization each website performs. Moreover, the sources of site traffic can inform about popular channels; websites can gain traffic through organic search, direct search, paid search, social media, display ads, emails, and referrals. Lastly, gender and age group distribution can give information about website users (SimilarWeb, n.d.).

Tool that will be used for the analysis:	SimilarWeb
---	------------

2.2. USABILITY

User interface design (commonly referred to as “usability”) is essential to survive on the web simply because if a website is not user friendly i.e. if the users face some difficulties, they might leave (Anjum, Sarker, & Ahmed, 2018). Indeed, if users cannot understand straightforward what the company offers and what they can do on the website, or if they get lost and if information is hard to read, etc., people will leave (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 306).

In order for website users to be able to navigate easily and with satisfaction, we have created a framework composed of thirteen criteria to check website usability. The first part is composed of nine criteria (Reamonn, 2019):

- Presence of highly noticeable calls-to-action¹¹
- Good use of colors: less than five colors in one display
- Avoid blocks of text: break-up text with one idea per paragraph, use bulleted lists

⁹ Unique visitors per month: “the number of unduplicated (counted only once) visitors to your website over the course of a single month” (Adobe Experience Cloud Help, 2019).

¹⁰ Bounce rate<: “a “bounce” occurs when someone visits your website and leaves without interacting further with your site. Your bounce rate shows you the percentage of your visitors who bounce off of your site” (Bounce rate analytics: how to measure, assess, and audit to increase conversions, n.d.)

¹¹ Calls-to-action: “A call to action (CTA) is a marketing term that refers to the next step a marketer wants its audience or reader to take. For example, it can instruct the reader to click the buy button to complete a sale” (Kenton, 2020).

- Fonts Readability: contrasting with background color, text big enough
- Logo brings you back to the homepage
- Primary navigation menu is top horizontal or left vertical
- Use of padding (white spaces) to give the website an airy and sophisticated look
- Use of drop-down boxes to avoid mistakes and make it easier for the user
- Use prompts when the user has made a mistake

In addition to the first nine criteria, four important elements must be added to the framework to ensure website usability: localization, website loading time, web accessibility, and the 404 web page.

Indeed, first, a website may be visited by people from various countries and nationalities who speak different languages and who may have different product needs depending on culture attributes. Therefore, the tailoring of a website to suit different countries is called “localization”. It can go from simply converting the website into different versions to altering promotions depending on the country. Singh and Pereira (2005), provided a framework of the different levels of website localization: there are four types of localized websites: first, the semi-localized website which only displays contact information about foreign subsidiaries to international visitors. Second, the localized website is a country-specific website with language translation where relevant. Third, the highly localized website, which is a country specific website including localization efforts in top of the language translation (e.g. currencies). The fourth one is the culturally customized website reflecting a total immersion into specific cultures, providing sometimes several websites for one country encompassing different cultures (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 310).

Second, the performance of websites is becoming even more important now with the increased usage of smartphones, which typically have inferior bandwidth connections than desktops. If we refer to the average user perception of the acceptable loading time of pages, a research by Google (2017) demonstrated that it is two seconds, whereas the average European site loading time is 8 seconds. Moreover, research by Trilibis (2014) on 150 mobile responsive websites showed that only 21% of those sites required less than four seconds to load on a smartphone and 32% required between 8 and 48 seconds. Trilibis found out that the reason behind these sluggish loading times were primarily due to image size (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, pp. 300-301). Page speed is important for two main elements. First, it is crucial to have a low

loading page time for search engine optimization; this point will be further developed in *section 3.1.1. on-page optimization*. Second, if a website is slow, it can affect the ability to generate leads, as people will most likely leave the website and interrupt a potential conversion (e.g. buy an item on an e-commerce website) (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, pp. 301-302).

Tools that will be used for the analysis:	Pingdom Website Speed Test, Google TestMySite & PageSpeed Insights
--	--

Third, web accessibility is a core requirement for websites. It can be defined as “the degree to which a product, device, service, or environment is available to as many people as possible” (Reamonn, 2019) and is achieved through the use of alternative text¹². Indeed, all users should be able to interact with a website in spite of any disabilities they might have (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 306). Visually impaired users use screen readers that will read the alt attribute in order for them to understand on-site images. Two other benefits ensue from using alternative text; the first one is that if images cannot load, it is the alternative text which will be displayed on the screen at the exact spot of where the image should have appeared. The second benefit is that it contributes to image SEO (Search Engine Optimization) (Moz, n.d.); this will be further detailed in *section 3.1.1. on-page optimization*.

Tool that will be used for the analysis:	WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool
---	--

Fourth, when a webpage requested by a user cannot be found, webserver direct the user to a “404 web page” which can easily drive the user out of the website. In order to avoid the occurrence of the latter, customization of the 404 web page by including pointers to the homepage or other pages is highly recommended because it will help keep users on the website and enhance their search experience (Ziakis, Vlachopoulou, Kyrkoudis, & Karagkiozidou, 2019).

Tool that will be used for the analysis:	Woorank
---	---------

Usability testing involves finding a participant as well as identifying specific tasks. The researcher asks the participant to complete each of these tasks and observes the behavior, as well as listens to feedback. The goals include identifying issues in the design of the website, uncovering opportunities for improvement and learning about target user’s behavior and

¹² “Alt text (alternative text) is a word or phrase that can be inserted as an attribute in an HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) document to tell Web site viewers the nature or contents of an image” (Rouse, alt text (alternative text), 2012).

thoughts (Moran, 2019). For the site to be evaluated as successful, the tasks have to be completed effectively (1), which means that researchers measure task completion, and efficiently (2), which means that researchers measure how long (or how many clicks) it takes to complete the so-given task (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, pp. 305-306). In practice, the participant should at least have a comparable background to the website's target user group or have similar needs/desires (Moran, 2019). For a test to be successful, it asks no more than five participants because after the fifth one, the researcher will be observing the same findings without retrieving many new insights (Nielsen, 2000).

2.3. E-SERVICE QUALITY

E-service quality is a widely examined research topic in the field of service research because it influences customer shopping behaviors and outcomes and therefore, a company's financial performance. E-service quality can be defined according to two points of view; from a firm's perspective, e-service has been defined as "*the extent to which a website facilitates efficient and effective shopping, purchasing, and delivery*" (Kim & Kim, 2018) whereas from a customer's perspective, it has been defined as "*consumers overall evaluation and judgment of the excellence and quality of e-service offerings in the virtual marketplace*" (Kim & Kim, 2018).

Previous studies have developed necessary requirements for general e-commerce websites and then applied them in the context of luxury websites with no considerable revisions. Therefore, Jung-Hwan Kim & Minjeong Kim chose to undertake a more exploratory approach to define a list of e-service attributes specifically for luxury brands, instead of making the assumption that general e-service quality attributes were sufficient to evaluate the e-service quality of luxury brands. Extraordinary service quality being the primary competitive business strategy for luxury brands, it is even more crucial for those companies to ensure a quality e-service for their e-commerce platforms; indeed, a high standard of e-service quality is a key success factor for luxury brands.

The above-mentioned research lead to the building of a comprehensive list of attributes essential to fully embrace the e-commerce opportunity and provide customers with an unprecedented luxury shopping experience. The list contains 107 e-service attributes classified in 7 categories (Kim & Kim, 2018) (See Appendix 2):

- Browsing dimension. The browsing dimension gathers 12 e-service attributes which helps the customers find the information they are looking for on the website as well as facilitates product search. The good organization and easiness of a website are crucial factors in assessing web quality and are positively correlated to site revisit intention and purchase decision.
- Transaction dimension. The transaction dimension gathers 16 e-service attributes aiming to provide the customers with the easiest and safest purchasing process. In the e-commerce context, transaction is the high-task relevant attribute converting site navigators into customers and affecting overall website quality perception and satisfaction. If fulfilled, this critical element leads to trust and repurchase behaviors.
- Company and trust dimension. The company and trust dimension gathers 12 e-service attributes that have the sole purpose of fostering a positive relationship between the customers and the company by installing a climate of trust. Company information helps reduce customers' concerns about data privacy and therefore perceived risk about information sharing which enhances confidence in the brand website.
- Personalization dimension. The personalization dimension gathers 28 e-service attributes that would help deliver a personalized shopping experience to the customers by offering various options and special services. Offering a tailored service to customer's specific needs leads to satisfaction and fosters buying impulse.
- Product presentation dimension. The product presentation dimension gathers 28 e-service attributes that provide various ways to present the products on the website to offer the best feeling of exquisiteness. Especially relevant for fashion websites, sophisticated visual product presentation modes evoke an internal state of pleasure in the consumer's mind and leads to a more positive product evaluation process.
- Website design dimension. The website design dimension gathers 5 e-service attributes that have the purpose of enhancing the website's aesthetics to give it the best overall appearance. Online luxury shoppers are looking to purchase the whole product, namely the place of purchase in addition to the product. Therefore, website design is of the utmost importance in the process of attracting and converting site navigators to customers.
- Entertainment dimension. The entertainment dimension gathers 6 e-service attributes that includes extra features such as social media or trend information. Entertainment

drives emotional excitement and positive brand impressions and thus, influences exploratory behavior and site involvement.

SECTION 3: SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING (SEM)

As Internet emerged and billions of websites popped up, search engines started to gradually evaluate the relevance of all these websites on their indexes in comparison to users' queries. Various website characteristics and metrics were taken into consideration by search engines to measure their value using compound algorithms. This led to a fierce competition online and therefore to the discovery and implementation by website owners of many techniques to rank high in search engines result pages (SERPs) (Ziakis, Vlachopoulou, Kyrkoudis, & Karagkiozidou, 2019).

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is a technique used to generate quality visitors to a website. "Given the obvious importance of reaching an audience during their consideration process for a product or when they are locating a brand, SEM has become a fiercely competitive area of digital marketing" (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, pp. 400-401). Performing the highest ranking possible for a website in the SERPs achieves a higher click-through rate resulting in more site visits (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 403).

SEM is divided into two main types: the search engine optimization (SEO) and the paid search (pay-per-click) marketing (PPC) (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 401). This thesis will only focus on the topic of SEO.

3.1. SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)

"Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the practice of optimizing web pages in a way that improves their ranking in the organic search results for the targeted keywords" (Li, Lin, & Lin, 2014). It is important to point out that in order to get a sufficient amount of organic visitors onto the website, the latter has to be indexed into the first page of the SERPs for the targeted keywords and preferably in the first three results of that same page. The factors influencing the ranking of websites on SERPs are constantly being reviewed and so algorithms are being altered which makes SEO a dynamic process (Ziakis, Vlachopoulou, Kyrkoudis, & Karagkiozidou, 2019). Moreover, as SEO experts do not have access to any information from search engine concerning the way the ranking algorithm operates, SEO practice can only help websites in

their quest to ranking improvement but cannot guarantee top ranking in the SERPs (Li, Lin, & Lin, 2014).

We have developed a framework including the important criteria to check to ensure an optimization of web pages. This framework includes eight groups of elements to verify for on-page optimization, as well as the importance of backlinks.

3.1.1. ON-PAGE OPTIMIZATION

On-page optimization is the first technique that can help improve websites ranking in SERPs. It is most of the time achieved directly through the code of the website; however, further techniques such as content and link/directory structure are also performed (Lali, Mehr, Ul Mustafa, & Ali, 2018).

Duplicate content

Search engine robots will crawl the homepage of a website but not necessarily all the other pages nor will it systematically assign them the same weight in terms of relevance. Therefore, a website owner has to ensure that as many of the site's relevant pages are included within the search engine indexes one is targeting. Pages that are considered to be duplicate content (i.e. pages evaluated to be similar by the search engine) will not rank high. Therefore, in order to avoid that, the website code source should include canonical meta tags which indicates the search engine which page is the one with original content (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 407). Moreover, as search engines value quality content, “a frequently updated content has better chance to get ranked higher in search engines for related keywords” (Ziakis, Vlachopoulou, Kyrkoudis, & Karagkiozidou, 2019).

Tool that will be used for the analysis:	Siteline & Sitechecker
---	------------------------

Website loading time

As mentioned above, an important factor for SEO is the website loading time caused by the page size. Indeed, even though graphic elements improve the appearance of a website, it can affect the loading time if used excessively. “The higher the loading time, the lower the ranking of a website in the search results” (Ziakis, Vlachopoulou, Kyrkoudis, &

Karagkiozidou, 2019). Search engines take this matter very seriously as it wishes users to access relevant content as fast as possible (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 302).

Tools that will be used for the analysis:	Pingdom Website Speed Test, Google TestMySite & PageSpeed Insights
--	--

Validity of the HTML code

For the elements of a website to be indexed correctly by the search engine, the HTML format is required for the code. If the code of a website is valid (i.e. code written according to industry standards), the website is more likely to work in different browsers.

Tool that will be used for the analysis:	validator.w3.org
---	------------------

Alt tags

Nevertheless, images and videos require extra information (alt tag for images and a transcript for videos) (Ziakos, Vlachopoulou, Kyrkoudis, & Karagkiozidou, 2019). Using alt tags provides a better image description which is a guidance to search engine crawlers in order for them to index the image properly (Moz, n.d.).

Tool that will be used for the analysis:	Woorank
---	---------

Meta-data

Site owners have to pay particular attention to two important meta-data¹³: the document <title> tag (i.e. the title of the HTML file) and the keywords in h1/h2/h3 tags (i.e. the h1 is the main title of the webpage with h2 as its subheading and h3 as a subheading of h2). The document title tag is crucial for two reasons; the first one is that search engines place significant importance on key phrases and so will trace it and rank it more easily, and the second one is that this is the hyperlink that will appear on the search engine results page and so possibly generate more clicks if it contains both powerful and relevant copy (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 410). The document title tag should ideally be between 20 to 70 letters long (Woorank, n.d.). Concerning the keywords in h1/h2/h3 tags, it is crucial to leverage this step of on-page optimization. In fact, a website with relevant and targeted headings will be ranked higher by

¹³ Meta data = « Metadata is data that describes other data. Meta is a prefix that -- in most information technology usages -- means "an underlying definition or description." Metadata summarizes basic information about data, which can make finding and working with particular instances of data easier» (Rouse, metadata, 2019).

search engines because the crawler investigates these tags (with h1 as primary importance, followed by h2 and so on) to extract information regarding the website content. Therefore, those headings should be present on every page of the website. Building on the importance of keywords, the more a targeted keyword appears in the general text content of a website, the more optimized it will be (Ziakis, Vlachopoulou, Kyrkoudis, & Karagkiozidou, 2019).

Indeed, as search engines favor content rich websites as it is more informative, websites with longer text achieve a higher ranking in the SERPs than website with little or no text. A correlation with the number of keywords might exist as well since a longer text might entail a higher frequency of the targeted keywords (Ziakis, Vlachopoulou, Kyrkoudis, & Karagkiozidou, 2019).

Another important aspect of page intervention is the description meta tag. The description meta tag is a valuable attribute located within the <head> section of the HTML tag (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 410). It constitutes the information that will be displayed on the SERPs as description of the content of a webpage just below the link (Ziakis, Vlachopoulou, Kyrkoudis, & Karagkiozidou, 2019), which already provides great information on the content of the website to generate traffic (Lali, Mehr, Ul Mustafa, & Ali, 2018). If it is not controlled by the content owner, snippets¹⁴ will be used from within the body copy, so it is best to create this description meta tag as it will help create a stronger call-to-action on the SERPs. Moreover, the description meta tag has to be distinct for every page in order to avoid being down weighted by search engines for duplicate content (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 410); in fact, the meta description constitutes an indication for search engines on the keywords based on which the webpage will be indexed. The meta tag description should not contain more than 155 characters which is the size of a standard text recommended by Google to the risk of being considered as spam i.e. displaying the keywords excessively. The domain name of the website should also contain the targeted keywords as it will facilitate the tracing of the website by the crawlers and it should remain as short as possible and understandable (Ziakis, Vlachopoulou, Kyrkoudis, & Karagkiozidou, 2019). In addition, URLs cannot contain underscores because search engines only take hyphens into consideration as words dividers (Woorank, n.d.).

Tool that will be used for the analysis:	Woorank
---	---------

¹⁴ Snippets = Code "snippets" are small, reusable pieces of code that can be integrated into a larger codebase. (Techopedia, 2020)

Sitemap xml file

For the crawler to be able to find all the subpages of the website and correctly index it, the web developer of a website should create a sitemap xml file. The uploading of this sitemap will also be a way to notify the search engines if any changes were made to the site and the frequency of these changes, as well as the degree of significance of the pages. Having a sitemap xml file is also an important source of information for the search engines as the website's ranking is correlated to the number of pages the website has (Ziakis, Vlachopoulou, Kyrkoudis, & Karagkiozidou, 2019).

Bounce rate & Time spent on website

Two metrics play an important role in on-page optimization: the bounce rate and the time on site. First, the bounce rate can be defined as “the percentage of visitors to a particular website who navigate away from the site after viewing only one page” (Lexico, n.d.). A website with a low bounce rate indicates that its content is of high quality as well as relevant for the user, which makes it rank higher in the SERPs. Second, the time on site can be defined as “the amount of time (in minutes or seconds) visitors have spent on your website” (Webopedia, n.d.). The more time users spend on the website, the more it will be perceived by search engines as displaying rich and relevant content for its users, the higher it will rank in SERPs.

Tool that will be used for the analysis:	SimilarWeb
---	------------

Mobile responsive design

As over 60% of online searches come from mobile devices, a website must adopt a mobile responsive web design (Barling, 2015). A responsive web design can be defined as “a website design that adjusts gracefully to fit on desktop, tablet, and smartphone browsers” (Steimie, 2013). Luxury customers most of the time or always search for information on mobile devices prior to purchase, so, brands with easy-to-navigate, informative, mobile-friendly websites are way more likely to driving traffic (McKinsey&Company, 2014). If websites are not optimized for mobiles, users might bounce off the website and the latter might downgrade in ranking as mobile responsiveness is factored in the search engines algorithms (Steimie, 2013). The main elements that characterize mobile responsive websites are text readability, large-enough button size, avoid horizontal scrolling, make the search field visible and usable, make navigation menu as simple as possible, make important pages reachable from the start to minimize clicks and

provide the possibility to quickly navigate back to the home page, use breadcrumbs and watch for page download speed (Johansson, 2019).

Tools that will be used for the analysis:	Google Mobile Friendly test & Woorank
--	---------------------------------------

3.1.2. BACKLINKS

On-site optimization is insufficient for SEO. Indeed, the number and quality of links coming from other websites is a great way for search engines to determine the relevance of a web page, and so is acknowledged to be one of the strongest ranking factors (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 411). Having links coming into the website is already positive, but if the links come from a reputable site with similar content to the original website, it is even better (Reamonn, 2019). Furthermore, as social media became an undeniable source of information, connecting social media accounts to the website can generate additional traffic and most importantly for SEO, quality backlinks. This means that search engines algorithms started to assess social signals¹⁵ and content creation on social media as an indication of the value of a website (Ziakis, Vlachopoulou, Kyrkoudis, & Karagkiozidou, 2019), to become now a remarkable part of SEO (Giomelakis & Veglis, 2016).

Tool that will be used for the analysis:	Woorank
---	---------

SECTION 4: SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING (SMM)

“Social media is the term commonly given to Internet and mobile-based channels and tools that allow users to interact with each other and share opinions and content. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks and encouraging participation and engagement” (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 238). Today, the importance of social media applications is growing in people’s daily lives, making these platforms highly influential and effective for business communication (Alalwan, Rana, & Dwivedi, 2017). Indeed, this proliferation of social media forced companies to look for and implement innovative ways to reach and engage with their customers (Godey, et al., 2016). It follows that social media represent a powerful digital tool for businesses to increase brand awareness as well as connect with prospect customers in their social communities to construct more personal relationships. To leverage this remarkable opportunity, marketers have to put in place strong social media

¹⁵ Social signals: «Social signals refer to a webpage’s collective shares, likes and overall social media visibility as perceived by search engines» (Big Commerce, n.d.).

marketing strategies which will help them boost leads and sales (Marketing Insider Group, 2018; Godey, et al., 2016). Social Media Marketing (SMM) can therefore be defined as *“Monitoring and facilitating customer-customer interaction and participation throughout the web to encourage positive engagement with a company and its brands”* (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 526).

In the context of the growing new generation of luxury customers who are very active on social media, it is imperative for luxury brands to constantly innovate in their marketing strategy in order to remain relevant and establish long-term relationships with current and prospect customers (Vinerean & Opreana, 2019). Moreover, this young demographic is the one driving luxury purchases online (Athwal, Istanbuluoglu, & McCormack, 2018). Therefore, investing heavily in SMM will enable luxury brands to create deep and rich relationships with their online communities through positive online encounters, improving brand trust and loyalty (Arrigo, 2018; Athwal, Istanbuluoglu, & McCormack, 2018).

Social media play a role at every stage of the customer journey from awareness to purchase and repurchase giving brands the opportunity to acquire, retain and expand their customer base (Vinerean & Opreana, 2019). In fact, 20.5% of respondents find information about fashion luxury goods and trends on social media (Deloitte, 2017). Moreover, a positive impact on customer's perception of luxury, desire for luxury and purchase intention has been observed when luxury fashion brands carry out social media marketing (Vinerean & Opreana, 2019). Despite the divergence between the luxury related characteristics of scarcity and discretion and the apparent accessibility and availability of social media, it has been proven that luxury brand marketing fosters trust among customers and helps develop brand evangelism (Vinerean & Opreana, 2019). Nevertheless, luxury brands adapt their SMM strategy in order to maintain an image of exclusivity; they tend to adopt the practices of offline marketing in traditional press by accentuating aesthetics and artisanal connotations (Athwal, Istanbuluoglu, & McCormack, 2018). What is more, communication on social media provides luxury brands with an immense source of data (Arrigo, 2018). This data helps brands to be relevant in their advertising and to develop strong relationships with customers (Colella, Amatulli, & Pilar Martinez-Ruiz, 2019).

Research has shown that Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook are the three social media most commonly used by luxury brands for SMM (Athwal, Istanbuluoglu, & McCormack, 2018).

Ideally, the content strategy should be adapted to each social media while keeping a sense of coherence. Furthermore as browsing through luxury brands' social media accounts leads to "click-through" to official websites (Athwal, Istanbuluoglu, & McCormack, 2018), brands must focus on grabbing the target audience and highlighting calls-to-action leading to the desired outcome, namely the purchase of a product (Vinerean & Opreana, 2019). When a user clicks on an ad or a post featuring products from a specific brand on social media, he will be redirected to the website of that brand. This entrance page can sometimes be the home page of the website, but it is highly recommended to design landing pages. A landing page is a page that will focus its messaging on the content of the ad in question. Doing so will help maximizing conversion rates (even more if a call to action is present on the landing page) as well as brand favorability (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 318). Furthermore, as having focused landing pages converts users more effectively to the desired action, the investment placed in online media will not be wasted and will help gain a return (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 367)

4.1. INSTAGRAM

Studies found that among Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, it is Instagram which scores the highest brand engagement (Romao, Moro, Rita, & Ramos, 2018). Instagram counts over 1 billion users and is identified as the fastest growing social media (Vinerean & Opreana, 2019). Instagram is giving users the opportunity to follow, enjoy, and engage with the visuals posted by brands, influencers, and friends, to easily shop different products. The content users see on Instagram inspire their future search behaviors as well as shopping intention (Vinerean & Opreana, 2019).

Instagram has a visual component complementing impeccably the esthetic standards of luxury fashion brands (Romao, Moro, Rita, & Ramos, 2018) and causing a high appeal among luxury customers. Marketers have to proactively create original, attention-grabbing and engaging content on Instagram. In fact, "the best way for luxury brands to inspire consumers has always been through storytelling. As Instagram is a visual storytelling platform, the link is a natural fit" — Tennilles Kopiasz, Senior Vice President of Marketing at Parfums Christian Dior (Vinerean & Opreana, 2019). This storytelling can be performed through the original use of the content posted on the feed, namely pictures and videos as well as stories, and IGTV¹⁶ where

¹⁶ IGTV= feature on Instagram enabling the user to watch vertical videos longer than one minute (Systrom, 2018).

brands often unveil their behind-the-scenes. The Instagram feed “should have an editorial look and be timeless, compared to stories, where momentary and ephemeral content has great value” (Vinerean & Opreana, 2019).

An additional effective practice is the use of hashtags which enables targeted research and inspiration for users on Instagram, as well as the opportunity for brand to mobilize the right audience (Vinerean & Opreana, 2019). Lastly, Instagram developed a shopping feature where users can look at products and be redirected to the website to directly buy them (Instagram, n.d.).

Best practices: create attention-grabbing and engaging content with an editorial look via the feed, unveil behind-the-scenes content with the IGTV, create stories with an ephemeral feel.

4.2. TWITTER

Twitter is one of the most popular social media worldwide (Creusy, 2015) and has emerged as the network in which users could interact and participate in real-time conversations (Bizadmark, n.d.). In fact, most brands use it as a way to create effective conversation around their brand and products, (Creusy, 2015), to build and sustain excitement around events even when they are unfolding, (McKinsey&Company, 2014) and to establish contact with customers (Manikonda, Venkatesan, Kambhampati, & Li, 2015).

Twitter is the second most used social media in the luxury sector. Brands feature their events, unveil their behind-the-scenes, and publish their stories (Hanania, Musnik, & Gaillochet, 2019). Then, users use it a lot to learn and comment on live events posted by brands (McKinsey&Company, 2014). In order to leverage this platform to gain prospective customers and to generate an appeal for the brand’s products, the use of hashtags is highly popular as it creates links between different Twitter accounts. Therefore, luxury brands should create a hashtag for when they advertise a product or talk about an event so that it makes easy for customers to find the brands thereafter. In addition, in order to gain a better exposure and raise awareness, it is common for brands to mention other Twitter accounts and it is then making those other Twitter accounts talk about the brands that mentioned them. It is especially interesting for luxury brands as they often mention celebrities or famous stores, which can give them access to an incredibly broader audience (Creusy, 2016). Lastly, there is an opportunity in harnessing Twitter as an effective focused communication tool by creating “dedicated

purpose Twitter handles” such as a customer service (Management Association Information Resources, 2018).

Best practices: post about events, unveil their behind-the-scenes, effective use of hashtags, mention other Twitter accounts, create “dedicated purpose Twitter handles”.

4.3. FACEBOOK

Facebook is the biggest social media worldwide with about 2.6 billion monthly active users (Statista, 2020), and “ has become one of the most highly useful marketing tools to develop customer relationships and brand loyalty” (Aprilianty & Nasution, 2017). In fact, as Facebook fosters a relational process, interactions persist over time and so bring the message delivered by the brand to last longer (Romao, Moro, Rita, & Ramos, 2018).

Many luxury brands are now convinced that Facebook has to be used as a medium to actively interact with users. Facebook brand pages can include visuals such as videos and pictures of products and fashion shows, but also text such as customers’ reviews and Facebook fans’ comments. Indeed, customers can learn about previous purchase experiences thanks to reviews, (Aprilianty & Nasution, 2017) as well as show interest by hitting the “like” button (which contains an extension to “love”, “haha”, “wow”, sad and angry), by commenting on a post and possibly “tagging” friends, and by sharing content to show an even higher level of engagement (Dhaoui, 2014). Nevertheless, the feature that stands out the most are the videos; indeed, brands should prioritize video posts to photos or text as Facebook videos is one of the most effective ways to deliver content and create engagement. User scroll less fast on Facebook than on Instagram, generating more views and more interactions on videos posted on Facebook. Furthermore, user interactions are developed during a long period of time during which people take pleasure in commenting (Romao, Moro, Rita, & Ramos, 2018). Brand pages create the opportunity to engage actively both on the side of the community members as well as the brand page manager (Pletikosa Cvijikj, 2012).

Lastly, on top of all the information available about the company (McKinsey&Company, 2014), many luxury fashion brands’ Facebook pages feature links that directly lead to the brand’s official website to encourage potential online purchases (Aprilianty & Nasution, 2017). Other features such as a calendar of upcoming events, links to the other social media owned by the

brand, and contact information (email address, phone number) are important to have on the Facebook page (Aprilianty & Nasution, 2017).

Best practices: post more videos than images, include information about the company, links to the official websites and social media, a calendar of upcoming events, contact information (email, phone number).

PART 2: CASE STUDIES

As discussed in the theory, luxury companies are now facing a challenge where digital is becoming a key competitive business strategy in the industry. In order to research if luxury brands now optimized their digital marketing tools, we have decided to analyze three flagships of the luxury industry, namely Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci.

CHAPTER 1: LOUIS VUITTON

SECTION 1: TARGETING AND POSITIONING

By analyzing Louis Vuitton's website and social media accounts, we can deduct the brand's targeting and positioning statements. Indeed, we can say that it targets both men and women with high income and disposable income. In fact, it is a luxury brand developing products for both men and women and characterized by premium prices. Moreover, by looking at the history of Louis Vuitton who started as a trunk-master, we understand that this heritage has made of Louis Vuitton the reference brand for travel bags, luggage and trunks. Thereby, we can suggest that the target customers have an interest in travelling. Furthermore, by looking at Louis Vuitton's advertisements, we mostly observe perfect, self-confident and powerful women which could imply that Louis Vuitton targets successful and driven people.

We can say that Louis Vuitton targets all age groups. However, by looking at the partnerships it made, for example with the most famous street style fashion brand *Supreme*, as well as at the brand ambassadors it uses such as the 18 year old model Kaia Gerber, we understand that Louis Vuitton especially wishes to reach the younger generations. Therefore, from our sole interpretation, the target age group could be estimated to 18-60.

From our own interpretation, Louis Vuitton's association with craftsmanship, exceptional quality, and continuous innovation positions the brand as the Master of Luxury in customers' mind.

SECTION 2: FOUNDATION AND OWNERSHIP

The French fashion House Louis Vuitton was founded in 1854. In 1977, the company becomes a multinational and then merges with Moët Hennessy to create LVMH in 1987. Two years later, Bernard Arnault, current chairman & CEO since 1989 becomes the majority shareholder of the group and wants to build an empire out of it by diversifying its product range. In 1997, Marc Jacobs becomes the artistic director of the Louis Vuitton House and develops lines of ready-to-wear clothes, as well as further diversifications in jewelry, shoes, and accessories (Vogue, 2008). Since 2012, Michael Burke is the CEO of Louis Vuitton, supported by Delphine Arnault as deputy CEO (LVMH, n.d.).

SECTION 3: LVMH

The LVMH group gathers more than 75 luxury Houses and is the only actor in this sector to be present in the five major luxury sectors: Wine & Spirits, Fashion and Leatherwork, Perfumes & Cosmetics, Watches & Jewelry and Selective Distribution (LVMH, n.d.). If LVMH today is the spearhead of its industry, it is because it has shown the way to global distribution models and enabled certain brand owners to become billionaires in less than a decade (Hanania, Musnik, & Gaillochet, 2019, p. 22).

SECTION 4: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Concerning LVMH's financial performance, revenues in 2019 amounted €53,671bn (LVMH, 2019) with an increase of roughly 15% from 2018. Louis Vuitton stands in the category "Fashion and Leatherwork" which is the most important one of the group with an increase in sales of 20.49% between 2018 and 2019 which is mostly due to Louis Vuitton's "exceptional performance" (LVMH, 2020) (see **Table 1**).

Table 1 – LVMH revenues

In billions of euros	2018	2019	Delta
Wine & Spirits	5.143	5.576	+8.42%
Fashion and Leatherwork	18.455	22.237	+20.49%
Perfumes & Cosmetics	6.092	6.835	+12.2%
Watches and Jewelry	4.123	4.405	+6.84%
Selective Distribution	13.646	14.791	+8.4%

Source: LVMH (2020)

The majority shareholders are the Christian Dior SE holding with 41.1% of the shares, which is controlled by the Arnault Family. The latter also owns another 5.97% of the capital (Zone bourse, 2019).

CHAPTER 2: HERMÈS

SECTION 1: TARGETING AND POSITIONING

By analyzing Hermès' website and social media accounts, we can deduct the brand's targeting and positioning statements. Indeed, we can say that Hermès targets both men and women by designing clothing lines for both. Furthermore, due to Hermès' values of inaccessibility (in price and quantity), we can say that its target group is characterized by a very high financial background profile and a desire to increase social status inside an exclusive group. Looking at Hermès' advertisements we understand the characteristics of uniqueness, simplicity, and the feeling of everlasting that customers look for in the brand. Taking all this into account, we can suggest, from our sole interpretation, that Hermès' customer base would comprise people above 25 years old and more.

From our own interpretation and from noticing the recent collaboration with the French luxury automobiles manufacturer Bugatti, there is no doubt that Hermès positions itself as the ultimate exclusive and traditional French fashion luxury brand.

SECTION 2: FOUNDATION AND OWNERSHIP

The French fashion House Hermès was founded in 1837 in Paris by Thierry Hermès. In 1978, Jean-Louis Dumas, the great-great-grandson of Thierry Hermès, takes ownership of the House and continues to diversify the know-how of the brand. In 2004, Jean-Paul Gaultier becomes the

artistic director of the House (Katheleys, n.d.). In 2004, Patrick Thomas becomes CEO of the brand, first one to be a non-family member at the head of Hermès for 150 years, in a tandem with Jean-Louis Dumas, then on its own from 2006 (Challenges, 2014). Christophe Lemaire then become the artistic director in 2010 to then leave his place to Pierre-Alexis Dumas, Jean-Louis Dumas' son. Axel Dumas, Jean-Louis Dumas' nephew is the CEO of the House since 2013 (Vogue, 2008).

SECTION 3: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Hermès achieved a 15.4% growth in revenues from 2018 to 2019, amounting to almost 6.9bn in 2019 (Hermès, 2019) (See **Table 2**).

Table 2 — Hermès revenues

In billions of euros	2018	2019	Delta
Hermès	5,966	6,883	+15.4%

Source: Hermès (2019)

The majority shareholders are the H51 SAS with 54.2% of the shares, the Hermès Family with 12.5%, Nicolas Puech with 4.91% and the Arnault Family with 1.87% (Zone bourse, 2019).

CHAPTER 3: GUCCI

SECTION 1: TARGETING AND POSITIONING

By analyzing Gucci's website and social media, we can deduct the brand's targeting and positioning statements. Indeed, it is featuring men and women wearing premium price clothing, so we can assert that Gucci's target market regroups both men and women with high income and disposable income. Moreover, we can say that Gucci targets all age groups. However, by looking for instance at Gucci's collaboration with Dapper Dan in 2018, we can suggest that Gucci especially wants to reach young people by incorporating trendy brands to its more mature lines of items. Indeed, this line was worn by young faces from Harlem displaying tracksuits and faded jeans in luxurious fabrics. Therefore, from our sole interpretation, we would estimate the target age group to 18-60.

By looking at Gucci's advertisements, we can observe that the models wear extravagant clothes in unusual sceneries. Therefore, we can guess that Gucci is targeting fashion conscious people who like to have fun and stand out in crowds.

From our own interpretation, Gucci's association with high quality, trendy, and Italian's craftsmanship heritage, positions it as a strong iconic luxury brand in the mind of customers.

SECTION 2: FOUNDATION AND OWNERSHIP

The Italian Fashion House Gucci was founded in Florence in 1921. In 1987, Gucci is bought by an investment firm in the United Arab Emirates, Investcorp because of the difficult time Gucci experienced in the in 80s. In 1994, Tom Ford becomes the artistic director and manages to boost the brand. In 2003, Gucci is acquired by the French luxury group PPR (now called Kering). The CEO of the House is Marco Bizzarri, and the artistic director is Alessandro Michele since 2015 (Vogue, 2008)

SECTION 3: KERING

The Kering group is a multinational active in the sectors of Fashion, Leatherwork, Jewels and Watches, comprising 13 Houses (Kering, n.d.).

SECTION 4: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Concerning Kering's financial performance, revenues amounted to €15.88bn in 2019 with an increase of 16.24% from 2018 (Kering, 2020). Gucci represents largely the most important share in revenues of the group, namely 63% in 2019 with an increase in sales of 16.2% from 2018 to 2019 (See **Table 3**).

Table 3 — Kering revenues

In billions of euros	2018	2019	Delta
Gucci	8.285	9.628	+16.2%
Saint Laurent	1.744	2.049	+17.5%
Bottega Veneta	1.109	1.168	+5.3%
Other Houses	2.109	2.538	+20.3%

Source: Kering (2020)

The majority shareholder is the François Pinault Family with 40.9% of the shares (Zone bourse, 2019).

PART 3: METHODOLOGY

First and foremost, it is interesting to point out why the fashion luxury companies Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci were chosen to be analyzed. To begin with, they belong to the personal luxury goods market, representing “the core of the core” of the luxury segments, and especially to the subcategories “shoes”, “jewelry” and “leather goods” (Bain&Company, 2020) which comprises the majority of their respective activities. Furthermore, they all belong to the KHOLC (Kering, Hermès, l’Oréal Luxe, LVMH, and Chanel), a group comprising the flagships of the luxury industry (Deloitte, 2019). In fact, Gucci was chosen as it largely represents the most important share in revenues of the group Kering, making of Gucci, Kering’s crown jewel; then, Louis Vuitton was selected as its exceptional performance is the main reason the luxury giant, LVMH, achieves such revenue growth in its biggest category “fashion and leatherwork”; lastly, the scope of this thesis did not enable us to analyze both Hermès and Chanel, which led us to choose Hermès for its particularity to still remaining today mainly owned by its heirs. In fact, this suggests a higher tendency towards tradition, making the House Hermès interesting to confront to Louis Vuitton and Gucci, both belonging to two of the biggest luxury conglomerates worldwide. These reasons made the three direct competitors, Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci, the most interesting and sensible fashion luxury Houses to analyze and to compare. As a side note, L’Oréal Luxe was chosen to be left out as it only operates in the “beauty” category, the latter achieving lower growth than the three other categories of the personal luxury goods market listed above.

To answer our research question, *“Are the key digital tools used by fashion luxury brands well optimized today? A comparative analysis between Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci”*, the thesis will be composed of an exploratory analysis based on available sources since we had no privileged contact with the three luxury companies. Thereby, the challenge was to identify tools that would help us perform the most analytical and rigorous analysis of the companies’ respective websites. To achieve that, we have made a thorough research to find free online tools that lead us to discover eleven of them that could be exploited to carry out several parts of our exploratory analysis. The allocation of these tools to the specific criteria they will help us verify and analyze was made throughout the literature review, and a list summarizing the tools identified can be found in **Table 4** below.

Table 4 – Description of the free online tools

Tools	Description
SimilarWeb	SimilarWeb is a British information technology company founded in 2009. It is a free platform that assembles, measures, analyzes and gives out in-depth metrics on client engagement and traffic on websites with the help of Big data (Crunchbase, n.d.; Chrome, 2020).
Google Test My Site	Free tool for businesses to measure a specific page's speed (Think with Google, 2016).
PageSpeed Insights	Free tool to analyze the content of a web page: it generates suggestions to enhance page speed (PageSpeed Insights, n.d.).
WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool	Free tool that helps website owner at making their content accessible to users with disabilities. Wave will identify accessibility errors and facilitate human evaluation of site content (WebAim, n.d.).
Sitechecker	Free tool that will perform an overall SEO audit on the chosen websites. It will spot issues regarding technical referencing and provide tips on how to fix them (Sitechecker, 2020).
Woorank	Free tool that will provide an SEO audit on websites. It will give the essential information needed to optimize the websites based on the errors retrieved (Woorank, n.d.).
Sitelineer	Free tool that will explore the website and provide a summary of the key issues that affect search engine rankings and website's quality with a particular emphasis on duplicate content (Indigo Stream Technologies, 2020).
validator.w3.org	Free tool to check the markup validity of Web documents in HTML, XHTML, SMIL, MathML, etc. The "markup validation" can be defined as "the process of checking a Web document against the grammar (generally a DTD) it claims to be using" (W3C, n.d.).
Google Mobile Friendly test	Free tool to check if a webpage is optimized for mobile viewers (Wix, n.d.).
Pingdom Website Speed Test	Free tool that enables you to monitor website's uptime and performance to gain a better user experience (solarwinds pingdom, n.d.).
SocialStats	Free tool that will provide Instagram analytics (SocialStats, n.d.)

The analysis of the websites will mostly be structured using frameworks that have been carefully detailed in the literature review. Except for the framework on e-service quality that has been built by the authors Kim & Kim (2019), we have elaborated our own frameworks for

the two remain parts concerning the websites analysis, namely the parts on usability and search engine marketing, based on extensive literature research in scientific articles and in books. The part on social media constitutes an attempt at providing a descriptive analysis.

As an addition to our websites analysis, we have conducted a highly exploratory analysis regarding the part on the usability of the websites; an “over-the-shoulder-test” has been conducted with 5 participants, all chosen because of their deep interest in fashion luxury (See Appendix 3 for the information on the participants). This usability testing involved asking each participant to complete a task. The task consisted in asking the participants to simulate the whole process of purchasing an item, from selecting the object on the website to just before entering the payment information, on each of the three websites. The behavior was observed, and feedback was requested regarding the pros and cons of each website’s usability, with a special focus on product search. The objective behind this usability testing was to identify any additional insights to our structured and rigorous analysis, coming from five tech savvy young people holding a deep interest in luxury.

Concerning the structure, the analytical part of the thesis will follow the same structure as presented in the *Chapter 2: digital marketing* of the literature review as the theory will be used as reference to carry out the analysis. The first section will be dedicated to the analysis of the websites (overall performance, usability, and e-service quality), followed by an assessment of their search engine marketing, to end with a section on social media marketing. The results will be discussed throughout the analysis, providing insights for each company as well as allowing a comparison between the three companies.

PART 4: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

It has been established in the literature review that two digital tools should be optimized today by fashion luxury brands in order to succeed in the digital era. Consequently, to answer the research question of this thesis, namely “*Are the key digital tools used by fashion luxury brands well optimized today? A comparative analysis between Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci*”, this part will include a thorough analysis of Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci’s websites, as well as attempt at providing an analysis of their social media accounts.

CHAPTER 1: WEBSITE ANALYSIS

As a starting point, we will provide an in-depth analysis of the website, which, as stated in the theory, must hold an essential role in luxury brand’s digital marketing program. First, several metrics will be retrieved in order to provide an overview of Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci’s websites performance, sources of traffics, and users. Second, we will evaluate the usability of the websites, which is fundamental to give the best possible on-site experience and therefore to retain users. Thirdly, we will look into the e-service quality of each website, crucial to provide customers with the best possible online shopping experience and therefore increase sales. Throughout the analysis, we will reflect on the results and suggest possible improvements.

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF WEBSITES’ PERFORMANCE, SOURCES OF TRAFFIC, AND USERS

All the statistics included in this section have been retrieved from the free online tool *SimilarWeb*, during a 3-month period going from November 2019 to January 2020, worldwide.

1.1. TRAFFIC AND INTERACTIONS

To begin with, it is interesting to look at quantitative data concerning traffic and interactions to have a first broad idea of the performance of each of the three websites. Considering that to date, 1.78 billion websites have been recorded on the web (Gaudiaut, 2020), we can evaluate, by looking at the ranking presented in **Table 5** that the three websites receive a fairly good amount of traffic. Comparatively, Louis Vuitton and Gucci both indicate a very close ranking, leaving Hermès with a much lower amount of traffic.

Table 5 — World ranking of websites from Nov 2019-Jan 2020 worldwide

Domain	Ranking (#)*
louisvuitton.com	#2,829
gucci.com	#3,589
hermes.com	#15,548
*The ranking is based on the traffic received by each website against all the other websites worldwide (the website generating the most traffic worldwide, in that category, is ranked as #1).	

Source: SimilarWeb (2019-2020)

If we look at metrics concerning traffic (See **Table 6**), namely the total number of visits, the number of monthly visits, and the number of unique visitors per month, we can suggest that Louis Vuitton and Gucci both score high, leaving Hermès with significantly lower numbers. This lagging performance from Hermès in traffic metrics could be argued by the fact that Hermès' target customer base is older (estimated to 25+) than the ones of Louis Vuitton and Gucci (estimated to 18-50), and so possibly less inclined to navigate online.

Regarding interaction metrics (See **Table 6**), we can observe that there is no significant difference in the number of pages per visit, which can be estimated to be as high as the average number of 7 for all three websites. Then, looking at the bounce rate, Hermès and Gucci record a fairly similar one around approximately 50% whereas Louis Vuitton outperforms them with a lower bounce rate around 40%. The same trend is observed concerning the duration of a visit, where Hermès and Gucci both oscillate around a 3 minutes long visit, while Louis Vuitton almost reaches an average of 5 minutes. Overall, it appears that Louis Vuitton's website is the best at retaining users which would suggest a better website optimization (e.g. design, usability).

Table 6 — Overview of traffic and interactions metrics from Nov 2019-Jan 2020 worldwide

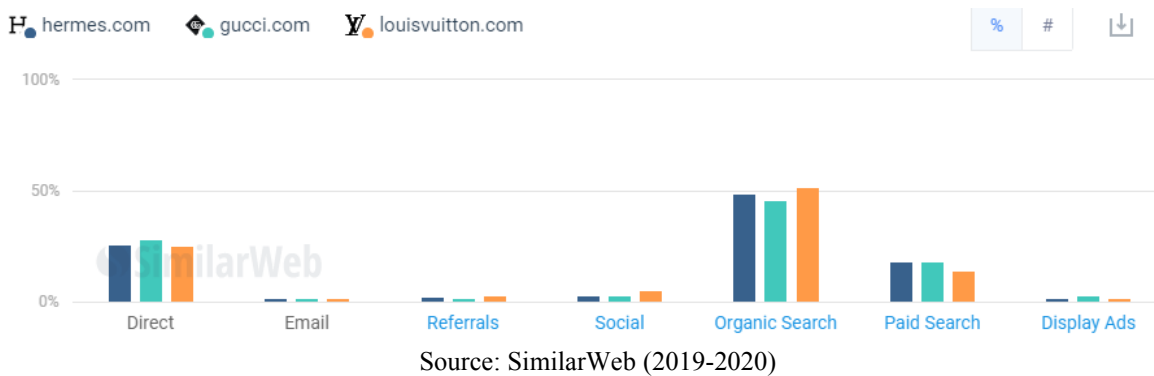
Domain	Total number of visits (in million)	Monthly visits (in million)	Unique visitors per month (in million)*	Pages per visit (#)	Bounce rate (in %)**	Duration of a visit (hh:mm:ss)
hermes.com	9.11	3.04	2.20	6.53	51.91	00:02:44
gucci.com	36.66	10.88	7.32	7.41	47.94	00:03:08
louisvuitton.com	41.53	13.84	7.96	7.47	39.96	00:04:51
*Unique visitors per month: “the number of unduplicated (counted only once) visitors to your website over the course of a single month” (Adobe Experience Cloud Help, 2019). **Bounce rate: “a “bounce” occurs when someone visits your website and leaves without interacting further with your site. Your bounce rate shows you the percentage of your visitors who bounce off of your site” (Bounce rate analytics: how to measure, assess, and audit to increase conversions, n.d.).						

Source: SimilarWeb (2019-2020)

1.2. MARKETING CHANNELS

After reviewing the amount of traffic and interactions each website receives, it is relevant to understand where that website traffic comes from. By looking at **Figure 1**, we can positively say that organic search is the primary source of traffic for luxury brands in general. Indeed, users have the habit of searching for a brand through the search engine search bar because it appears easier to them than typing in the exact URL of a website (Beauloye, 2019). The second traffic source is the direct search, although still remaining less important than the organic search.

Figure 1 — Overview of traffic sources from Nov 2019-Jan 2020 worldwide



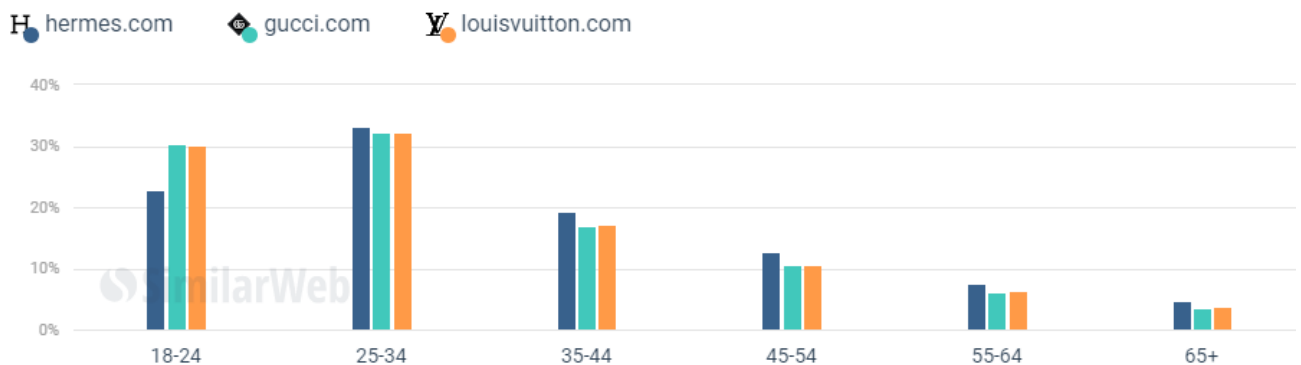
1.3. DEMOGRAPHICS

After having looked at the amount of traffic the websites are receiving as well as the sources of this traffic, it is interesting to understand who is actually navigating on the websites. By observing the **Figure 2**, it appears that overall, women are more inclined to visit the websites of Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci, than men although men represent a significant share of the traffic. Comparatively, there is no significant difference between the three brands, aside from Gucci slightly attracting the most women and Louis Vuitton and Hermès, the most men.

Figure 2 — Gender distribution from Nov 2019-Jan 2020 worldwide

Source: SimilarWeb (2019-2020)

Lastly, if we refer to **Figure 3**, it can be concluded that the younger generation (18-24 and 25-34 years old) is the primary navigator of Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci's websites. Comparatively, Louis Vuitton and Gucci show exactly the same results in every age group, and they are both significantly more popular than Hermès amongst the youngest generation (18-24). However, Hermès displays a higher level of popularity amongst older age groups.

Figure 3 — Age group distribution from Nov 2019-Dec 2020 worldwide

Source: SimilarWeb (2019-2020)

SECTION 2: USABILITY

As usability is an essential criterion to retain users and consequently, to survive on the web with an e-commerce platform, it has to be carefully analyzed. In line with the theoretical framework we created in the literature review, two tables have been built (See **Table 7** and **Table 8**) presenting the important usability criteria to check on a website. The first table (**Table 7**) was developed using only careful observation of the websites, and the second table (**Table 8**) was constructed using the online tools presented page 34 to retrieve information.

Overall, it can be asserted that the three websites present good usability, they meet almost all the criteria in an optimized way. However, some potential improvements can always be highlighted.

- Concerning the usability of the Louis Vuitton website (See **Table 7** and **Table 8**), there is room for improvement in two areas: there is no use of prompts and the localization could be bettered. In fact, if the user makes a mistake in a field during the process of ordering an item, and that the website doesn't explain what it is then expected in that field, the user might stop the purchasing process and leave the website annoyed. What is more, Louis Vuitton has country specific websites, but the vast majority of them only offer English as language choice, and as “language is the first cultural barrier that tourists encounter as travelling” (Ivanovic, 2008), the same barrier can occur to users navigating through a website.
- Concerning the usability of the Hermès website (See **Table 7** and **Table 8**), there is room for improvement in three areas. First, even if Hermès does use calls-to-action, they are not visible and obvious enough to grab the user's attention (See the difference between the calls-to-action of the three websites below in **Figure 4**).

Figure 4 — calls-to-action



Source: Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci's respective websites (2020)

Furthermore, Hermès should structure more its products' descriptions with bullet points so that it appears clearer to the user interested in reading the details about the product (See Appendix 4 to see the difference between three product descriptions, each coming from one of the three websites). Lastly, as Louis Vuitton, Hermès has country specific websites, but the vast majority of them only offer English as language choice which can constitute a barrier for non-English speakers.

- Concerning the usability of the Gucci website (See **Table 7** and **Table 8**), there is room for improvement in three areas. First, there is an issue concerning readability; in fact, Gucci

chose a Serif font for its website, which makes sense for a luxury brand who wants to appear elegant and sophisticated. However, Serif fonts tend to be harder to read when scaled at a smaller size (deBara, n.d.), which makes Gucci's editorial content not always readable with ease. Second, as Louis Vuitton, Gucci does not use prompts when the user has made a mistake in the ordering process of an item, which can be a reason for order interruption. Lastly, Gucci's 404 web page could be enhanced; it does not provide any alternative to the user (e.g. a button to easily go back to the home page) (See Appendix 5 for a comparison between the 404 web pages of the three websites).

Concerning the important topic of page speed, Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci all record times above 2 seconds for loading time of their respective homepages on a computer, which is the acceptable time for page speed (demonstrated by Google). This suggests that they could look into the specific reasons of that sluggish page speed and try to rectify it by using the online tool *PageSpeed Insights*. The same applies concerning page speed on a mobile, with even slower times recorded. Overall, Louis Vuitton's website is the fastest of the three and Hermès the slowest.

Table 7 — Usability criteria: part 1

Usability criteria	Louis Vuitton	Hermès	Gucci
Presence of visible calls-to-action	Yes. Rectangles with contrasting font and background.	Yes/No. But they are just underlined and not in rectangles which makes them less visible and persuasive.	Yes. Rectangles with contrasting font and background.
Good use of colors: less than 5 colors in one display	Yes. Mainly black and white with some beige touches.	Yes. The main colors are beige, black and white.	Yes. The main colors are light grey, black and white.
Avoid blocks of text: break-up text with one idea per paragraph, use bulleted lists	Yes. Text is broken up in paragraphs for the editorial content and bulleted lists are used for product description.	Yes/No. Text is broken up in paragraphs for the editorial content, but no bulleted lists used for product description.	Yes. Text is broken up in paragraphs for the editorial content and bulleted lists are used for product description.
Fonts Readability: contrasting with background color, text big enough	Yes. Black font on a white background. Sans serif* font and text big enough.	Yes. Black font on a beige background. Serif* font and text big enough.	Yes/No. Black font on a light grey or white background. Serif* font and text not big enough.
Logo brings you back to the homepage	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Primary navigation menu is top horizontal or left vertical	Yes. Top horizontal.	Yes. Left vertical (click on the hamburger menu icon to see the menu).	Yes. Top horizontal.
Use of padding (white spaces)	Yes. Good use of padding. Airy website.	Yes. Good use of padding. Airy website.	Yes. Good use of padding. Airy website.

Use of drop-down boxes	Yes. In the order process: for the title, country, and the prefix of the phone number.	Yes. In the order process: for the title and country.	Yes. In the order process: for the title and the prefix of the phone number (the country is predefined).
Use prompts when the user has made a mistake	No. The field appears in red, but no example on how to properly fill in the boxes.	Yes. Shows an example on how to properly fill in the boxes.	Yes/No. It tells the user it is wrong but no example on how to properly fill in the boxes.
Localization**	Yes. Highly localized. - There is a “choose your country” page with 29 countries. However, most of the time, the only language available is English. - For remaining countries, an international website in English is available. - Currencies are adapted for every country. - Overall, no difference between website content. N.B. The Belgian website is not available in French nor in Dutch.	Yes. Highly localized. - There is a “localization” page with 27 countries. However, most of the time, the only language available is English. - No international website available for remaining countries. - Currencies are adapted for every country. - Overall, no difference between website content. N.B. The Belgium website is available in French but not in Dutch.	Yes. Highly localized. - There is a “localization” page with 34 countries. However, not every site is translated according to local language, but a scrolling menu proposing German, French, English, Spanish, Italian and Chinese is always available. - Currencies are adapted for every country. - Overall, no difference between website content. N.B. The Belgium website is available in French but not in Dutch.

***Serif vs. Sans Serif fonts:** Serif fonts have decorative tails within the letters while Sans serif fonts are made up of simple lines (deBara, n.d.).

****Localization:** the tailoring of a website to suit different countries (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 310).

N.B. This analysis has been conducted during the month of June 2020

Source: based on Reamonn (2019) & Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019)

Table 8 – Usability criteria: part 2

Criteria	Tools	Louis Vuitton	Hermès	Gucci
Website loading time	Pingdom Website Speed Test	Homepage of the Belgian website (computer)	Homepage of the Belgian website (computer)	Homepage of the Belgian website (computer)
		2.38 sec	3.37 sec	3.17 sec
	Google TestMySite	n/a	n/a	n/a
		2.60 sec on a mobile with 4G network in Belgium	3.40 sec on a mobile with 4G network in Belgium	2.90 sec on a mobile with 4G network in Belgium
<i>Comments</i>	To get the technical insights on how to enhance a specific page speed, consult the free online tool PageSpeed Insights by entering the URL(s) of the desired website(s).			
Web accessibility (Alt tags)	Woorank	Homepage of the US website	Homepage of the US website	Homepage of the US website
		No alt tags missing!	No alt tags missing!	No alt tags missing!
404 web page	Woorank	The 404 web page is customized with an original image as well as	The 404 web page is customized in that the message is made funny and	The 404 web page has a customized background but the message appearing on

		a polite message advising to try again or to contact the client services for help (with contact info right under) (See Appendix 5).	original while offering the possibility with 2 CTA to navigate back to the homepage or to try the search option again (See Appendix 5).	the page is basic and does not offer any alternative solutions to users (See Appendix 5).
--	--	---	---	---

N.B. This analysis has been conducted during the month of June 2020

Source: based on Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019), Reamonn, (2019) & Ziakis, Vlachopoulou, Kyrkoudis, & Karagkiozidou (2019)

In order to gain additional insights, we have conducted a usability testing and we have gathered the testimony of five young tech savvy people with a deep interest in luxury. In fact, these five people were all asked to simulate the purchase process of a wallet on the three brands' respective Belgian websites and to give feedback on their product search experiences. Concerning Louis Vuitton's websites, we have gathered overall very positive feedback on the usability of the website and easiness of product search. In fact, participants number 1, 2, 4, and 5, all indicated that the primary positive point concerned the organization of the menu: it comprises very little entries and more layers (e.g. they select either men or women, then a general product category such as "wallets and small leather goods" and then they can refine their search even more by already filtering such as "long wallets") (See Appendix 6). Therefore, these four participants concluded that this clarity in menu organization entailed a gain of time. Participant number 4 used another way to find the product in question: she used the search bar feature by typing "portefeuille" in it even though the website is in English, and she directly landed on the right page featuring all wallets. Building on that, participant 4 was bothered by the fact that the Belgian website was only available in English and not in French.

Looking at feedback concerning Gucci's website, one critic concerning menu organization was expressed by participants 2 and 4. In fact, they argued that the menu contained too many entries at a time with no layers, making the menu appear crowded (See Appendix 7). Participants 2 and 4 both said that as all the categories and subcategories were appearing at once, it took a great amount of time to spot the exact product category they were looking for. However, for participant 5, the opinion diverged in that it enabled her to directly click on the right category, even if it took a little more time to spot it and therefore, reduce the number of clicks to get there. Participant 3 once again used the search bar to look for her product and found it very optimized.

Regarding Hermès' website, it received criticism from all the participants: they all defined the menu as messy and ineffectively organized. First, participants 2, 4, and 5 pointed out that there

were too many entries (See Appendix 8) in the menu and that they were repetitive e.g. there is a tab “women” and a tab “men” in which you can find the same categories as the ones listed below in the menu (See Appendix 9). Furthermore, participants 1, 4 and 5 all agreed on the fact that the categories should be grouped differently e.g. the category “bags” should be separated from the small leather goods, and they advised that the category “small leather goods” be called “wallets and small leather goods” in order to clearly understand where to look for wallets. Lastly participant 3 once again used the search function to look for the item. She typed “portefeuille” and landed on a page displaying no result, making the search function highly unoptimized.

Reflecting on Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci’ website overall usability, it is interesting to highlight a best practice from each website.

- Louis Vuitton’s best practice is its overall clarity on the website, reflected especially in the way the primary navigation menu is organized. In fact, a few general categories are presented in the top part (e.g. women), leading to a next layer where all the product categories are listed (e.g. wallets and small leather goods), then leading to a focused last layer listing more precise categories within that first category (e.g. long wallets) (See Appendix 6).
- Hermès’ best practice is its 404 web page. Indeed, it uses a familiar and funny vocabulary and it provides two calls-to-action, namely one to go back to the home page and one to try out a new search (See Appendix 5).
- Gucci’s best practice is its website localization. In fact, independent on the country specific website the user finds itself on, there will always be six languages available, namely German, French, English, Spanish, Italian and Chinese to translate the website.

SECTION 3: E-SERVICE QUALITY

To evaluate the quality of the e-commerce platform each website has implemented, we will use the framework written by the authors Juang-Hwan Kim & Minjeong Kim, explained in the literature review. It consists of a list of 107 e-service attributes regrouped in 7 dimensions which was established to ensure performance and exclusivity of luxury brands websites. For the sake of presentation, the table is broken down according to the 7 e-service dimensions. Comments are sometimes included in the tables for further details. The following analysis has been conducted based on the respective Belgian websites of Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci.

Browsing dimension

This first dimension sees to ensure that users' product search experience is facilitated. Overall, looking at Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci's browsing dimension quality (See **Table 9**), it can be asserted as well optimized. However, it is interesting to point out the few missing features. In fact, concerning product search, they all display several options to filter and sort items, except for Louis Vuitton which does not offer any sorting option. Concerning the browsing option, Hermès is the only one not offering a "view all" option which means that users must inevitably choose a specific page. Next, the search engine is very well optimized for Louis Vuitton and Gucci, giving the opportunity to quickly look for an item by typing key words or product reference; but Hermès' key word option does not always work well. Moreover, Hermès does not have an advanced search function in that only a few suggestions appear when a user types a keyword whereas Louis Vuitton and Gucci propose categories, photos of products, etc. to efficiently help the users in their quests. Lastly, the three websites have the following important features: the shopping cart, a FAQs section, and a back to top button. Lets' note that Gucci is missing browsing instructions and browser requirements.

Table 9 – Kim & Kim e-service framework - browsing dimension

E-service attributes		Louis Vuitton	Hermès	Gucci
		Available or not?	Available or not?	Available or not?
Advanced search function*		Yes.	No.	Yes.
Comments			Only very few suggestions appear.	
Sort of items (by most popular, latest arrival, etc.)	Available?	No.	Yes.	Yes.
	1 option available			
	2 options available		Yes.	Yes.
	3 options available			
	4 or more options available			
Filter items (by color, size, style, price, etc.)	Available?	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
	1 option available			
	2 options available			
	3 options available	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Browsing option (by page, view all, by product, etc.)	Available?	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
	1 option available		Yes.	
	2 options available	Yes.		Yes.
	3 options available			
Comments			The only option available is to browse by page, there is no "view all" option.	
Search engine (by key word, product number)	Available?	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
	1 option available			
	2 options available	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.

<i>Comments</i>			- Keyword option not efficient - Product number option works but the user lands on the SRP displaying 1 result instead of directly landing on the single product page.	Product number option works but the user lands on the SRP displaying 1 result instead of directly landing on the single product page.
Shopping cart		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Sitemap		No.	Yes.	Yes.
FAQs		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Browsing instructions		Yes.	Yes.	No.
Browser requirement		Yes.	Yes.	No.
Dead links	Yes			
	No	No deadlinks.	No deadlinks.	No deadlinks.
<i>Comments</i>		Tool used: Woorank. Only checks the homepage of the website.	Tool used: Woorank. Only checks the homepage of the website.	Tool used: Woorank. Only checks the homepage of the website.
Back to top		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
<i>Comments</i>				The icon only appears when the user reaches the very bottom of the page.
*Advanced search function can be defined as going beyond autocomplete which means both completing the user's query in the search bar and offer specific suggestions to allow visitors to directly filter their search and pick from the right category (WebFx, n.d.). N.B. This analysis has been conducted during the month of June 2020				

Source: Kim & Kim (2018)

Transaction dimension

The second dimension was created to give users the most convenient and safest transaction process. Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci all understood the importance behind this objective (See **Table 10**): the basic info (e.g. shipping and handling info, return processing info, item availability) are available on all three websites. Regarding more advanced attributes such as packaging info, alternative order method, they were offered by the three websites. Indeed, in the context of fashion luxury items; packaging can be a very important differentiator (Kim & Kim, 2018). What is more, as the products these luxury companies sell online are very expensive, clients may wish to place orders by telephone in order to express their personal needs and concerns (Kim & Kim, 2018). Lastly, Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci all provide the maximum convenience concerning payment options, express checkout, and shipping method.

Table 10 – Kim & Kim e-service framework - transaction dimension

E-service attributes		Louis Vuitton	Hermès	Gucci
		Available or not?	Available or not?	Available or not?
Order instructions		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
<i>Comments</i>		Easy to find: in the FAQ.	Hard to find: in the Terms and conditions.	Only restricted to information on payment.
Multiple order option		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Alternative order method	Unavailable			
	By telephone	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
	By telephone and mail			
Order from catalog	Unavailable	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Available			
Express checkout		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Guest checkout		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Item availability		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
<i>Comments</i>		Users can also find out about in-store availability.		
Promotional codes		No.	No.	No.
Shipping method info.	Unavailable			
	Standard shipping only			
	Express shipping only		Yes.	Yes.
	Both	Yes.		
Shipping option	To me only	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
	To 1 alternative address			
	To multiple addresses			
Payment options	1 option available			
	2 options available			
	3 options available			
	4 or more options available	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Shipping & handling		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Refund processing info.		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Packaging info.		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Sales tax		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
International shipping	Available?	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
	Only to Belgium			
	Only to France			

N.B. This analysis has been conducted during the month of June 2020

Source: Kim & Kim (2018)

Company and trust dimension

The third dimension relates to fostering a positive relationship between the brands and its customers (See **Table 11**). A few critical areas for improvements have been discovered for Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci. When most of the companies owning a website create an “about us”, it is surprising that neither Louis Vuitton nor Hermès did (and very concise on the Gucci website). What is even more surprising is that the company history was missing on Hermès and Gucci’s websites. There is a blatant importance for luxury companies to establish “history” of “quality perception” and still, even flagship Houses fail in leveraging their website to tell their story of tradition and heritage, as well as all other relevant info about the brand (Kim & Kim, 2018). Then, even though Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci all have a dedicated page (even a dedicated website for Gucci) about their commitment in sustainable development, environment, etc., only Gucci posted a code of business ethics, which is today, and especially for the younger generation, an important information to share in order for people to learn about the values of the business. Lastly, terms of use, privacy policy, security policy and security certification were available for the three brands.

Table 11 — Kim & Kim e-service framework - company and trust dimension

E-service attributes	Louis Vuitton	Hermès	Gucci
	Available or not?	Available or not?	Available or not?
Company history	Yes.	No.	No.
General company information	No.	No.	Yes.
<i>Comments</i>	Missing an “About us” section	Missing an “About us” section	Very concise.
Term of use	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Recall information	n/a	n/a	n/a
Affiliate program	No.	No.	No.
Investor relations	No.	Yes.	No.
Business ethics	No.	No.	Yes.
Press release	No.	No.	No.
Privacy policy	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Security policy	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Security certification*	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Corporate social responsibility	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.

***Security certification:** “A website security certificate is a validation and encryption tool, part of the HTTPS protocol, which secures and encrypts data going back and forth between the server and the client browser. [...] Websites that use security certificates are identifiable through the HTTPS address starter and the padlock icon that appears in the address bar” (Techopedia, s.d.).

N.B. This analysis has been conducted during the month of June 2020

Source: Kim & Kim (2018)

Personalization dimension

The fourth dimension has the important role of satisfying customers' general beliefs and expectations about the exquisite service offered when shopping for luxury brands in-store, by offering the same tailored and personalized service online (Kim & Kim, 2018) (See **Table 12**). Regarding basic attributes about delivery and return, namely return/exchange policy, free shipping/return order, preaddressed return label, status tracking, and store location, Louis Vuitton, Gucci, and Hermès all complete them. However, concerning the company contacts, Louis Vuitton and Gucci go one step further in the personalization than Hermès which is only proposing phone and email; indeed, Louis Vuitton offers Messenger and Twitter for contact and as for Gucci, WhatsApp and live chat are proposed. Concerning upgraded services such as interactive shopping aids, gift wrapping/gift message services, proposition of alternative products/matching items, and customized alteration services (only in store for Hermès), the three brands once again optimized their website to include all these attributes. Furthermore, Hermès could enhance its website even more by adding extra features such as the possibility to make a Wishlist and to “share an item” with a friend via mail/social media, both well achieved by Louis Vuitton and Gucci. Both Louis Vuitton and Hermès could follow Gucci's example of adding a printer friendly option. The three brands could work on adding more personalized suggestion tabs such as “must-haves”, “look we love”, and “designer picks”. Lastly, all three brands performed good personalized marketing by inviting people to sign in for a newsletter and to download the app (except for Hermès which did not develop any mobile app).

Table 12 — Kim & Kim e-service framework - personalization dimension

E-service attributes		Louis Vuitton	Hermès	Gucci
		Available or not?	Available or not?	Available or not?
Satisfaction guarantee				
Return/ exchange policy		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Free shipping	Available?	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
	Standard free shipping on all order	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
	Standard free shipping over a certain amount			
Comments		Shipping in express delivery is chargeable over €2000.	Delivery is chargeable for furniture objects.	
Free return		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Pre-addressed return label		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.

Order status tracking		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Store location		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Company contacts	1 option available (email or telephone)			
	2 options available		Yes.	
	3 options available			
	4 options available (email, phone, fax, and mail)	Yes.		Yes.
<i>Comments</i>		Phone, email, Messenger, Twitter are proposed as contacts.	Phone and email are proposed as contacts.	Phone, email, WhatsApp and live chat are proposed as contacts
Interactive shopping aid	Available?	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
	Live help	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
	email	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Alteration service		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
<i>Comments</i>			Only in-store.	
Gift wrapping		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Gift card/message		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Gift receipts		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
E-gift card/certificates		No.	No.	No.
E-store credit card		No.	No.	No.
Suggestions for items	Available?	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
	Alternative products			
	Matching products			
	Both	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Promotions	Available?	No.	No.	No.
	1 type of promotion			
	2 types of promotion			
	3 types of promotion			
	4 or more types of promotion			
Wish list		Yes.	No.	Yes.
Share an item with friends	Available?	Yes.	No.	Yes.
	Email only			
	Social networking sites only			
	Both	Yes.	No.	Yes.
<i>Comments</i>		Via Facebook feed/story, Twitter, Pinterest, or email)		Via Facebook feed/story, Twitter, Pinterest, or email)
Printer friendly option		No.	No.	Yes.
Catalog request		No.	No.	No.
Account management		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Links to alternative sites		No.	Yes.	Yes.

<i>Comments</i>			External link about the Hermès foundation	External link to book a table at the Gucci Osteria.
Share designer favorites	Must-haves	Yes.	No.	No.
	Look we love	No.	No.	No.
	Designer picks	No.	No.	Yes.
<i>Comments</i>		Section called “Must-haves and essentials”		Section called “Gucci beloved”
Newsletter signup		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Download App for Mobile		Yes.	No.	Yes.
<i>Comments</i>			There is no Hermès app.	
N.B. This analysis has been conducted during the month of June 2020				

Source: Kim & Kim (2018)

Product presentation dimension

The fifth dimension comprises attributes on how the products are presented on the website, critical factor affecting customers’ purchasing decisions (See **Table 13**). Overall, Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci are doing an excellent job at presenting their products and at providing the necessary information attached to them. Indeed, a size chart with international conversions was always available, as well as 7 or more pieces of information per product, model measurements, item code, size request, alternative color view, and at least 5 choices of images. Concerning the way the images are presented, a lot of different views and functions are proposed (back view, side view, close-ups, full screen, zoom function, etc.) by the three websites, well complementing the written description. One special feature only proposed by Louis Vuitton is the video presentation adding a dimension of reality to the virtual. Furthermore, Gucci is the only one proposing a quick view of the products on the results page; in fact, by hovering over a products, a slider appears with different product views already and an option to go to the product specific page.

Table 13 — Kim & Kim e-service framework - product presentation dimension

E-service attributes		Louis Vuitton	Hermès	Gucci
		Available or not?	Available or not?	Available or not?
Size chart	Available?	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
	Measurement only			
	Measurement with international conversion (IC)			
	Measurement and measurement guide			
	Measurement with IC and measurement guide	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.

Product descriptions (# of pieces of information)	3 (basic info: color, size, price)			
	4 (basic info + 1 more)			
	5 (basic info + 2 more)			
	6 (basic info + 3 more)			
	7 (basic info + 4 more)	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Model measurement		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Item code (style #)		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Size request		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Quick look		No.	No.	Yes.
Back view		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Side view		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Larger view		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
3-D rotation		No.	No.	No.
Close-ups		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Magnified view (rollover image)		No.	No.	No.
Zoom function		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Full screen		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Virtual model		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Video presentation		Yes.	No.	No.
Customer review & rate		No.	No.	No.
Number of alternative images	None			
	1 alternative images			
	2 alternative images			
	3 alternative images			
	4 alternative images		Yes.	
	More than 5	Yes.		Yes.
Presented on mannequin		No.	No.	No.
Presented on model		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Presented on hanger		No.	No.	No.
Presented as flat		Yes.	No.	Yes.
Picture size		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Fabric swatches		No.	No.	No.
Close-ups fabric swatches		No.	No.	No.
Alternative color view		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Consistency of presentation	Consistent	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
	Inconsistent			
Consistency of image size	Consistent	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
	Inconsistent			

N.B. This analysis has been conducted during the month of June 2020

Source: Kim & Kim (2018)

Website design dimension

The sixth dimension is about website aesthetics (See **Table 14**). Gucci has a slider displayed on top of the page featuring a short video and images; Hermès' top of the page features a video, and Louis Vuitton only sticks to images. None of them employ background music.

Table 14 — Kim & Kim e-service framework - website design dimension

E-service attributes	Louis Vuitton	Hermès	Gucci
	Available or not?	Available or not?	Available or not?
Background music	No.	No.	No.
Flash intro	No.	No.	No.
Graphic intro	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Video intro	No.	Yes.	No.
Brand logos	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
N.B. This analysis has been conducted during the month of June 2020			

Source: Kim & Kim (2018)

Entertainment dimension

The seventh and last dimension about entertainment relates primarily about social media as well as to some nice-to-have additional features to enhance website content quality (See **Table 15**). Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci all provide links towards their social media accounts, reflecting luxury brands' effort to generate engagement with customers. The social media utilized by the three brands are Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. What is more, none of them posted style trend info and only Louis Vuitton and Gucci (very concise for Gucci) published a designer biography. These elements could be leveraged to create interest and positive brand impression (Kim & Kim, 2018).

Table 15 — Kim & Kim e-service framework - entertainment dimension

E-service attributes		Louis Vuitton	Hermès	Gucci
		Available or not?	Available or not?	Available or not?
Style trend info.		No.	No.	No.
Designer biography		Yes.	No.	Yes
Comments				Very concise.
Social networks	Unavailable			
	1 option available			
	2 options available			
	3 options available			
	4 or more options available	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.

<i>Comments</i>		Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube, Pinterest, Foursquare.	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube.	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Google+.
Retailer blog		No.	No.	No.
Coupon on social networks		No.	No.	No.
Online survey		No.	No.	No.
N.B. This analysis has been conducted during the month of June 2020				

Source: Kim & Kim (2018)

CHAPTER 2: SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

In order for Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci to improve their ranking in the SERPs and therefore drive visitors to their respective websites, marketers have to give particular importance to on-page optimization; In fact, having a good ranking in the SERPs is important as organic search is the primary traffic source for luxury brands. In line with the theoretical framework we created in the literature review, the main factors that have to be carefully taken into consideration are listed and analyzed in the table below (See **Table 16**). The online tools presented page 34 were used to retrieve information, and the websites used by each online tool is systematically specified.

After having performed a detailed SEO audit of Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci, several remarks can be made. First, the three websites all show a relatively low amount of duplicate content which indicates a good control of the duplicate content. However, Louis Vuitton is not using canonical tags for 17 of its duplicate pages which can be easily fixed by choosing the canonical version that will be indexed in the search results and adding to its URL the “rel=canonical” on every duplicate page, including on the canonical one (Sitechecker, n.d.).

Second, Louis Vuitton and Hermès present quite a lot of errors in their HTML code that they should resolve for the following reason: browsers accept web pages with illegal HTML and make educated guess about what the code is trying to communicate but different browsers can make different guesses and end up confused, or even crash (W3C Markup Validation Service, n.d.).

Third, concerning the document title tags, the three websites should perform a better use of keywords by systematically adding all the relevant keywords in the document title tags as well as in every specific page title tag. What is more, regarding the h1/h2/h3 tags, they should all

leverage them better; for example, 70 h2 have been recorded for Hermès (with a majority that should not be coded as so such as “Forgot your password?”) whereas the h2 are the second most important titles for SEOs, and Gucci used the titles of its slider on top of the home page as h1, which do not include relevant keywords. Regarding description meta tags, the three websites managed to write the right amount of text (except for the Belgian and French website versions of Hermès which have a description that is too long) and to overall include relevant keywords; however, Gucci and Hermès should add the word “luxury” in their descriptions, and Louis Vuitton did not include any keywords at all for the US version of its websites contrarily to the French version. Louis Vuitton and Gucci provided different description for every important page, but Hermès forgot to add it for the pages about the product category “bags” for example.

Lastly, the three websites have done a good job at designing site maps and at creating solid URLs (Gucci should just think about making its URLs shorter by removing the unnecessary duplicate keywords).

Concerning backlinks, Gucci recorded a high amount of links up to more than 4 million, while Louis Vuitton recorded 123,070 links. However, even if Louis Vuitton has way less backlinks, the score attributed to those was “very good” in contrast to Gucci for which it was “Good”. The information was not available concerning Hermès’ website.

Table 16 — On-page optimization criteria - part 1

Criteria	Tools	Louis Vuitton	Hermès	Gucci
Duplicate content	Siteliner	Belgian website	German website	German website
		19% of duplicate content	17% of duplicate content	16% of duplicate content
	Sitechecker	17 duplicate pages without canonical tags.	Ok.	Ok.
Website loading time	<i>Cf. Table 15: Usability criteria – part 2</i>			
Validity of the HTML code	Validator w3	n/a	n/a	n/a
		106 errors; 12 warnings	279 errors; 28 warnings	6 errors; 9 warnings
Alt tags	<i>Cf. Table 15: Usability criteria – part 2</i>			
Document title tags	Woorank (+observation)	Homepage of the US website	Homepage of the US website	Homepage of the US website
		The title tag is 52 letters long (good).	The title tag is 45 letters long (good).	The title tag is 51 letters long (good).

		Only the French website includes all the relevant keywords “sacs de luxe, prêt-à-porter, parfums”. Then, by typing e.g. “Louis Vuitton bags women” in Google search bar to look at the title tag of a specific page in the SERP, we notice that the keyword “luxury” is missing (for the US, Belgian and French websites).	The title tag of the websites do not include any keywords besides the brand name. Then, by typing e.g. “Hermès bags women” in Google search bar to look at the title tag of a specific page in the SERP, we notice that the keyword “luxury” is missing (for the US, Belgian and French websites).	The title tags of the US, Belgian and French websites contain the relevant keywords "luxury" and "fashion". However, by typing e.g. “Gucci bags women” in Google search bar to look at the title tag of a specific page in the SERP, we notice a good title tag “sacs de luxe femme” for the French website and French version of the Belgian website, but for the English version of the latter, the word “luxury” is missing.
H1/h2/h3 tags	Woorank	Homepage of the US website 1 h1 and 7 h2. The h1 is “Louis Vuitton USA Official website” so no key words on top of the brand name. The 7 h2 don’t really contain any relevant keywords except for “handbag” and “monogram”.	Homepage of the US website 1 h1, 70 h2, 11 h3, and 4 h4. The h1 is actually the same as the title tag: "The official Hermès online store", with no key words apart from the brand name. Too many h2 that should not be coded as h2 such as "forgot your password?" or "Thank you!".	Homepage of the US website 5 h1, 4 h2, 5 h3. The h1 are the 5 titles of the slider on top of the homepage, which do not contain any relevant key words.
Description meta tag	Woorank (+observation)	Homepage of the US website - The description is 159 letters long (good). - However, we are missing the key words for the description of the US website. Only the French website has a different description including relevant key words such as “sacs de luxe, parfums, montres”. - All the different pages have different descriptions.	Homepage of the US website - The description is 133 letters long (good) but the description of the Belgian and French websites are 176 letters long (too long, the last word “bijoux” does not appear in the SERP). - The US, Belgian and French websites have the same description with relevant keywords such as “fashion accessories, scarves and ties, belts and	Homepage of the US website - The description is 149 letters long (good). - The US, Belgian and French website have the same description with relevant keywords such as sacs, chaussures, accessoires et le Prêt-à-Porter”. But missing the word “luxury”. - All the different pages have different descriptions.

			ready-to-wear, perfumes, watches and jewelry.” But all are missing the word “luxury”. Most of the pages have descriptions (different ones) but e.g. the page about bags does not have it controlled by the website owner.	
URL	Woorank (+observation)	Homepage of the US website	Homepage of the US website	Homepage of the US website
		Good: no underscores in URL. Keywords are there for every specific page.	Good: no underscores in URL. Key words are there for every specific page.	The URLs contain underscores. Keywords are present in every specific page but repeated to many times which makes the URLs too long.
Sitemap xml file		Belgian website https://en.louisvuitton.com/content/louisvuitton/sitemap/eng_NL/sitemap.xml	Belgian website https://www.hermes.com/be/fr/sitemap.xml	Belgian website https://www.gucci.com/be/fr/sitemap.xml
Bounce rate	Cf. Table 17: Overview of traffic and engagement metrics from Nov 2019-Jan 2020 worldwide			
Time spent on site	Cf. Table 18: Overview of traffic and engagement metrics from Nov 2019-Jan 2020 worldwide			
Back links	Woorank	US website 123,070 backlinks - Backlinks score*: very good	US website n/a.	US website 4,342,440 backlinks - Backlinks score*: good

***Backlinks score:** score calculated according to a mix of different criteria: the total number of backlinks, the number of domains pointing towards the website and the global assessment of the quality of the backlinks pointing towards the website. The latter relates to the quality of the pages from which the backlinks are originating.

N.B. This analysis has been conducted during the month of June 2020

Source: based on Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019) & Ziakis, Vlachopoulou, Kyrkoudis, & Karagkiozidou (2019)

As users are increasingly navigating on mobile phones, the last and indispensable criterion to evaluate in order to rank the highest possible in the SERPs is to have a mobile responsive website. Observation on a mobile phone was mainly used for the analysis as well as the online tool *Woorank*. The Belgian website was used as reference.

Overall, Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci, all developed very optimized mobile version of their respective websites by almost checking all the necessary categories seen in the literature

review as relevant to evaluate the mobile friendliness of a website. Nonetheless, a few areas for improvement could be highlighted (See **Table 19**).

- Louis Vuitton's mobile version website could enhance easiness of product search for users by making the filter option sticky so that users do not have to scroll all the way back up if they want to alter filters.
- Hermès' mobile version website comprises several features that could be bettered. Firstly, the menu contains 17 entries meaning that the user has to scroll down to see the end of the menu and cannot quickly picture which tab he must click on to get to the desired page. Furthermore, Hermès could make the sorting option sticky as it is done for the filter option in order for users to be able to change the sorting without having to scroll back up. Lastly, the search field does not provide any suggestions when users look for an item whereas it is a feature that could help users gain time.
- Gucci's mobile version website does not present any significant areas for improvements.
- A global tip for the three websites altogether would be to add breadcrumbs to remind the user of the page he currently is navigating on and how he got there.

Table 19 — on-page optimization criteria - part 2: criteria for a mobile responsive website

Criteria	Louis Vuitton	Hermès	Gucci
Text readability	Yes. Very readable: black font on a white background (Woorank validated, at least 60% of the text>Font12)	Yes. Very readable, black font on a light grey background (Woorank validated, at least 60% of the text>Font12)	Yes. Very readable, black font on a light grey background (Woorank validated, at least 60% of the text>Font12)
Large-enough button size	Yes. Very visible, the CTA are composed of a white font on black rectangles (Woorank validated)	Yes. But the CTA could be more attention-grabbing (here, it is just underlined text) and put in a box. (Woorank validated)	Yes. Very visible, the CTA are composed of a white font on black rectangles (Woorank validated)
Avoid horizontal scrolling	Yes. No horizontal scrolling, the content fits in the display window.	Yes. No horizontal scrolling, the content fits in the display window.	Yes. No horizontal scrolling, the content fits in the display window.
Make the search field visible and usable	Yes. Very visible and usable. It is right under the logo in the top middle and search suggestions are appearing when looking for an item.	Yes/No. Very visible, located in the top left-hand corner very visible. However, no search suggestions appearing when looking for an item.	Yes. Very visible and usable. It is located in the top right-hand corner and search suggestions are appearing when looking for an item.

Make navigation menu as simple as possible	• The menu was adapted from a horizontal top bar menu on the computer version to a hamburger menu on the left side on the phone version. • 5 entries, 3 layers. • The filter option is not sticky.	• Same menu as on the computer version: hamburger menu on the left side. • 17 entries (a bit much), 3 layers. • The filter option is sticky but not the sorting option.	• The menu was adapted from a horizontal top bar menu on the computer version to a hamburger menu on the left on the phone version. • 9 entries, 3 layers. • The filter and sorting options are sticky.
Make important pages reachable from the start to minimize clicks	Yes. There is slider on the top of the page featuring the new collections with a CTA to get to the page. Then, some other main pages of the website are presented.	Yes. On top, there is a CTA to the new summer 2020 women collection, followed by a section composed of 8 squares leading to the main pages of the websites (ready-to-wear, bags, etc.). Then, a link and a CTA leading to remaining important pages.	Yes. There is a slider showcasing amongst others "what's new", and the upcoming collection "pre-fall 2020", always accompanied by a CTA to directly land on these pages. Right under, there is a picture of the latest bag along with a CTA to the handbags page. Following, a CTA to go to other important pages of the website.
Provide the possibility to quickly navigate back to the home page	Yes. If you click on the logo in the top center, you go back to the home page.	Yes. If you click on the logo in the top center, you go back to the home page.	Yes. If you click on the logo in the top center, you go back to the home page.
Use breadcrumbs	No breadcrumbs.	No breadcrumbs but it is written on the top of the page where you are, e.g. "Pré-collection ..."	No breadcrumbs but it is written on the top of the page where you are, e.g. "Sandals for Women"
N.B. This analysis has been conducted during the month of June 2020			

Source: based on (Johansson, 2019)

CHAPTER 3: SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

As social media have been proven highly influential, and especially amongst its main user base, the younger generations (millennials and generation Z), we have chosen to provide an attempt at an exploratory analysis. The first section will provide an overview of the three most popular social media for luxury brands, namely Instagram, Facebook and Twitter accounts of Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci. Following, an analysis of the respective social media accounts of the brands will be provided.

SECTION 1: SOCIAL STATS

To begin with the analysis of Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci's social media, it is interesting to get a first overview of the popularity of each brand on social media as well as their respective behaviors on the platforms. (See **Table 20**).

- Regarding *Facebook*, the most popular brand is Louis Vuitton, with a number of likes on the page amounting to 23.6M, followed closely by Gucci with 19.3M, and leaving Hermès with 3.2M. Gucci is the most active brands of the three: it posts several posts a day, every day. Louis Vuitton posts regularly and sometimes several posts a day whereas Hermès' posts are less frequent and regular.
- Regarding *Instagram*, the most popular brand is Gucci with 40.4M followers, closely followed by Louis Vuitton with 38.3M followers, leaving Hermès with 10.1M. Gucci and Louis Vuitton are both very active, posting several posts a day, every day. As for Hermès, it is posting almost every day, creating here more content than on Facebook. Concerning the engagement rate, it is overall very low for the three brands (under 1%), with Gucci achieving the highest (0.22%), followed closely by Louis Vuitton (0.17%) and then finally, Hermès (0.10%). This overall low engagement rate for luxury brands could be argued by the following idea "the bigger the followership, the harder it is to engage your audience" (Hesketh, 2018). What is more, Instagram was originally created to act as a network for people to share images and interact with one another, the latter being a natural every day human behavior (Hesketh, 2018). However, humans do not interact with brands and so will be less inclined to do so on social media, and especially with brands who have very large followerships (e.g. luxury brands); they appear even less normal and users are then even less inclined to interact with them (Hesketh, 2018). Lastly, "big brands are well known but not well followed" (Hesketh, 2018), they acquire many followers for their high reputation but not so much for the content they actually create (Hesketh, 2018).

Gucci created three other Instagram accounts, one dedicated to spreading its message of social responsibility (@gucciequilibrium), one about its beauty line (@guccibeauty) and the last one about its osteria (@gucciosteria).

- Regarding *Twitter*, Louis Vuitton acquired the highest number of followers (7.4M), with Gucci quite close (5.9M), leaving Hermès with a substantially lower number of 82.6K followers. Louis Vuitton and Gucci both posts every day and several tweets a day, contrarily to Hermès. On top of its official Twitter account, Louis Vuitton owns one Twitter feed dedicated to answering customers' queries and complaints, as well as 8 country specific

pages. They all broadcast the same content but in the respective local language. Occasionally, Louis Vuitton's posts are tailored to the geographic location e.g. Italian actress at the Academy Award Gala was only showed on the Italian account, whereas the photos of Hollywood celebrities were posted on all the accounts (Athwal, Istanbuloglu, & McCormack, 2018).

Table 20 — Social stats

Social media	Metrics	Louis Vuitton	Hermès	Gucci
Facebook	Number of accounts	1 account - Official account: Louis Vuitton	1 account - Official account: Hermès	1 account - Official account: Gucci
	Number of likes	23.6M	3.2M	19.3M
	Frequency of posts	Very regularly. Sometimes two days in a row with two posts a day, sometimes every three days. The maximum laps of time between two posts was 10 days.	Not very regular. When there is a fashion show/special event or else, they post every day and sometimes two posts a day. But usually, they do not post very much, around 1 post every three weeks/a month.	Posts every day and several posts a day.
	Engagement with users	Do not answer to comments. But live chat appearing on the page.	Do not answer to comments. But live chat appearing on the page.	Do not answer to comments. But live chat appearing on the page.
Instagram	Number of accounts	1 account - Official account: @louisvuitton	1 account - Official account: @hermes	4 accounts - Official account: @gucci - Gucci Equilibrium community @gucciequilibrium - Gucci Osteria restaurant @gucciosteria - Gucci Beauty @guccibeauty
	Number of followers (official account)	38.3M	10.1M	40.4M
	Number of posts (official account)	4,297	1,889	6,918
	Engagement rate* (official account)	0.17%	0.15%	0.22%
	Frequency of posts	Every day, and several posts a day.	Posts almost every day.	Every day, several posts a day.

	(official account)			
	Engagement with users (official account)	None. Do not answer to comments.	None. Do not answer to comments.	None. Do not answer to comments.
Twitter	Number of accounts	10 accounts - Official account (Official page worldwide): @LouisVuitton - Country-specific pages: @LouisVuitton_US, @LouisVuitton_UK, @LouisVuitton_IT, @LouisVuitton_JP, @LouisVuitton_FR, @LouisVuitton_AU, @LouisVuitton_DE, @LouisVuitton_ZA - Official client services account: @LVServices	1 account - Official account: @Hermes_Paris	1 account - Official account (The #GucciCommunity): @gucci
	Number of followers (official account)	7.4M	82.6K	5.9M
	Number of tweets (official account)	5,759	317	9,838
	Frequency of posts (official account)	Every day, several posts a day.	Does not post regularly, sometimes nothing for a month, except for special events (then several posts a day).	Every day, several posts a day.
	Engagement with users (official account)	None. Except on the Official client Services account @LVServices.	None.	None.

***Engagement rate:** likes + comments on a post divided by the total number of followers (Reachbird, 2018). It has been calculated using the online tool *SocialStats*.

N.B. This analysis has been conducted during the month of June 2020. The information was retrieved from Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci's respective Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter official accounts.

SECTION 2: ANALYSIS OF THE OFFICIAL INSTAGRAM, FACEBOOK, AND TWITTER ACCOUNTS

Considering that the content is globally the same on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter for the three brands respectively, a thorough descriptive analysis of the content will be provided under 2.1. *Instagram*, and the following two sections on Facebook (2.2. *Facebook*) and Twitter (2.3.

Twitter) will just mention differences and similarities between the respective social media accounts of the brands and highlight any good practice that might arise.

2.1. INSTAGRAM

Story Highlights

Louis Vuitton just recently started creating story highlights. The first one was called #StayAtHome and was featuring posts about their actions towards the Covid-19 situation (message from the team, post about the repurposing of several of their workshops to manufacture face masks, etc.). Then, they created 4 others story highlights in which they grouped previous posts from their feed according to a specific theme; The three others regroup posts about “Travel”, their “Core Values”, and “#LVEditorials”. The 5th and last highlight story is named “Iconic shapes” and regroups a series of previous stories that they posted about their iconic bags, with guessing games concerning the original purpose of the bag, the dates of the first launch, etc.

Gucci has 92 story highlights and started creating them almost three years ago. The themes are very diverse; they have highlights about all the fashion weeks e.g. GucciFW19, inspirations for their collections e.g. #GucciEltonJohn, events e.g. Met Gala 2019, social causes e.g. #IWD, collections e.g. #GucciCruises, influencers/models/celebrities wearing Gucci e.g. #25waysToGucci, their involvement in the environmental cause e.g. Carbon Neutral, videos advertising products e.g. GucciTennis1977, and many more.

Hermès has 5 story highlights and started creating them almost a years ago. They present sneak peeks of the store in Paris (in STORES); the short-movie created to present the Christmas collection (in SURPRISE) and the trailer of the movie produced by Hermès (in NOW), videos of fashion shows (in FASHION SHOWS and EVENTS), and the presentation of their new concept called “petit h” (in EVENTS). However, the names of the highlight stories are not very representative of the content.

IGTV

To date, Louis Vuitton has 42 IGTV videos grouped in three series: “Maison Openings” including opinions of famous figures about the newly-opened stores, “Fashion Shows” which also includes videos of behind-the-scenes on top of sneak peeks into the shows, and “LV TV”

which features various type of content such as show days, travels, and “getting ready with” with famous figures, atelier visits, behind-the-scenes on collections and on the craftsmanship of the House.

Gucci has 47 IGTV videos. They mainly have videos of their fashion shows (all of them since 2015), as well as videos belonging to the series “Gucci Community”, featuring artists playing music, applying make-up, and creating stop-motion videos. Then, videos about various topics were uploaded such as a backstage video of the Gucci Spring Summer collection 2020, a short film about a call to action for Gucci’s commitment to creating lasting social impact, campaign films for products, art, etc.

Hermès has 26 IGTV videos which are mainly about collections. The few others are about diverse topics such as the story behind the new dinner service, the Hermès Carré Club (featuring scarf designer’s creativity), a podcast from the artistic director about Faubourg leather workshop, discussions on horseback riding, and a video about “petit h” (their new concept), etc.

Shopping

Louis Vuitton does not have the shopping feature.

Gucci and Hermès have the shopping feature which enables users to view some products and their price and be directly redirected to a specific landing page on the website presenting the product in question. You can also make wish lists. Hermès only displays a few bracelets while Gucci offers a small variety of articles. Moreover, Gucci and Hermès have a CTA in their bio “View Shop”, which brings users to the Instagram shopping feature where products are displayed and buyable.

Filters

Louis Vuitton recently developed a filter called “LV Rainbow” in line with its project called “The Rainbow Project”. The latter was put in place by the House just at the time of stores re-opening and consisted of asking employees’ children to paint rainbows on store windows in order to spread a message of optimism, hope, new beginnings, and happiness (Leong, 2020).

Gucci created two filters: one called “I see you” inspired by its new Spring Summer 2020 fashion show to promote self-expression and stop the feeling of being observed; (Lenslist, 2020) and the second one called “GGrad” which refers to the lineup of gifts Gucci has created for 2020 graduates claiming the achievement graduation represents, now even more considering this year’s unexpected challenges students have faced (Milled, 2020).

Hermès did not create any filter.

Feed

Louis Vuitton’s Instagram feed is consistent while offering different kinds of feels, with a predominant modern and sophisticated vibe. The majority of the posts are about product promotion, sometimes only the product alone is displayed on the post, and sometimes it is presented on models/celebrities in more sophisticated backgrounds. In order to buy the items through Instagram, the user has to click on the link in the bio, redirecting customers to an Instagram store, where you can click on the product of your choice and be redirected to the product specific page on the website and directly buy it. Apart from product promotion, Louis Vuitton posts about events such as Fashion weeks where users can find sneak peeks of the shows as well as pictures of guests/celebrities wearing Louis Vuitton, and stores openings for example. Special editorial content sometimes appears such as photos from their #SpiritOfTravel campaigns. A few posts about their engagement towards the Covid-19 situation were displayed. Overall, the majority of posts are photos and the “multiple photos” option is often used but Louis Vuitton also regularly shares video type of content, mainly for product promotion and shows. Louis Vuitton uses hashtags and tags but not systematically, e.g. the artistic director is often tagged under a product promotion post, but not all the time, as well as for the hashtag #LouisVuitton.

Gucci’s Instagram feed is bright, vibrant and consistent. A lot of posts are dedicated to the promotion of new collections, but the products are always featured in a very sophisticated scenery with a chic but extravagant vibe specific to Gucci. There is always the possibility to buy the products displayed on the posts when there is the “bag icon” attached to it. By clicking on the products, it leads to the shopping feature where you can then directly land on the product specific page on the website. Apart from product promotion, the content is rather editorial, e.g. presentation of exhibitions Gucci is supporting, comic books created in partnerships, magazine

covers, art books, actions concerning their movement Gucci Equilibrium, etc. Gucci communicates a lot about current events (Covid-19, the loss of George Floyd) as well as all the social causes they support (environment, LGBTQ community, gender-based violence, etc.). Lastly, when events such as the Fashion Week occur, Gucci posts photos about guests/celebrities wearing Gucci and sneak peeks of the shows. Overall, the feed is mostly composed of photos and Gucci uses a lot the “multiple photos” option but videos are also uploaded quite often for product promotion, beauty tutorials, and others. Gucci makes great use of tags and hashtags, carefully chosen for every post in a systematic and coherent way (the artistic director is always tagged and in a hashtag, in addition to the description of the post, e.g. #GucciEquilibrium, #GucciBeauty, #GucciCommunity, #GucciFW20, etc.)

Hermès’ Instagram feed is fun, colorful, and artistic: indeed, the products are sometimes presented in a goofy way and there are lots of drawings. The feed is organized in sections with a cover post to announce a new section which structures well the content and makes it original. Each section has a particular style and specific tones. The vast majority of posts are dedicated to product promotion in all sorts of ways: products alone, models wearing the products in a more staged background, and products in the form of drawings/comics. In addition, Hermès’ feed features diverse original sections such as dancers imitating “Hermès gestures”, illustrations of funny stories about the packaging, animations of stars in the sky forming the shape of a product, etc. Hermès uses a lot of hashtags under its posts and tags people when necessary.

2.2. FACEBOOK

Louis Vuitton, Hermès and Gucci’s Facebook pages all contain the necessary features. To begin, all three brands have a tab dedicated to company information where you can find a quick company overview, the founding date of the Houses, and some contact information (link to the brands’ websites, and a link to start a conversation on Facebook Messenger). More specifically, Louis Vuitton added the mission of the company and a products description, and Hermès added some general company information (registered capital, registered offices, etc.) as well as a phone number! Louis Vuitton and Gucci added a timeline displaying the main company events throughout recent years.

Then, the three of them have a map showing the location of all the stores worldwide, and a calendar listing past and upcoming events. Louis Vuitton’s page contains two additional features: a “work for us” tab where you can see all the position vacancies inside the company

and look for specific ones as well; and a “client services” tab which is currently not available. Hermès wrote a code of conduct concerning its Facebook page in a dedicated tab. Finally, Gucci has created a tab “Notes” where it posts news, but the content has not been updated since 2011. The three brands are missing direct links towards their other social media accounts, and Louis Vuitton and Hermès did not provide any phone number for users to contact them.

Concerning Louis Vuitton and Gucci’s posts, they are noticeably the same on Facebook as on Instagram, often selecting posts to put the most relevant on Facebook. Videos posted by Louis Vuitton and Gucci are often very short (around tens of seconds) and do not generate more engagement than posts. However, one of the latest video posts of Louis Vuitton (a Facebook exclusive video, 4 minutes long) about their new digital concept to present the new collection instead of the traditional format, generated an enormous amount of engagement.

Hermès behaves quite differently than the two other brands on Facebook: it posts way less on Facebook than on Instagram and is favoring videos to images. Indeed, it creates videos exclusively for Facebook based on the content posted on Instagram. The videos posted are longer than the ones on Louis Vuitton and Gucci’s Facebook pages (often reaching 1 minute).

2.3. TWITTER

Louis Vuitton’s Twitter account is noticeably displaying the same content as on its Instagram account, always leveraging well the use of Hashtags. Gucci, on the other hand, has a Twitter account displaying mostly similar content to its Facebook page, but adding Hashtags to the tweets.

As for Hermès, the Twitter account is noticeably different than its Facebook and Instagram accounts. Indeed, there is an emphasis on events; for example, Hermès displayed a comprehensive description of each of the iconic looks of the latest defiles, it announces store openings, talks about the Grand Prix of the Winter Equestrian Festival, etc. Here again, the use of Hashtags is well leveraged.

CHAPTER 4: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF WEBSITES' PERFORMANCE, SOURCES OF TRAFFIC, AND USERS

- The three websites all receive a good amount of traffic. Comparatively, Hermès receives a much lower amount of traffic than Louis Vuitton and Gucci.
- Louis Vuitton and Gucci both score high regarding traffic metrics (total number of visits, number of monthly visits, number of unique visitors per month), leaving Hermès with significantly lower numbers.
- The three websites indicate an average as high as 7 pages consulted per visit.
- Hermès and Gucci both record a bounce rate of approximately around 50%, while Louis Vuitton reaches a 40% bounce rate.
- Hermès and Gucci both oscillate around a 3 minutes long visit, while Louis Vuitton almost reaches an average of 5 minutes per visit.
- Organic search is the primary source of traffic for the three websites and luxury brands in general.
- Women represent a slightly higher share of visitors than men for the three websites. Comparatively, there is no significant difference between the three websites, aside from Gucci slightly attracting the most women and Louis Vuitton and Hermès, the most men.
- The younger generation (18-24; 25-34) is the primary navigator of the three websites. Louis Vuitton and Gucci are significantly more popular amongst the youngest generation (18-24) while Hermès displays a higher level of popularity amongst the older age groups.

SECTION 2: USABILITY

- Overall, the three websites present good usability, they meet the majority of the criteria presented in the frameworks for an optimized usability.
- Some areas for improvements can be highlighted for the three websites respectively:
 1. Louis Vuitton
 - No use of prompts in the order process: add prompts to prevent order interruption.
 - The vast majority of the country-specific websites only offer English as language option: provide more language options.
 2. Hermès

- Call-to-actions not visible and obvious enough to grab user's attention: use rectangle shapes to highlight them.
- Lack of structure in product descriptions: add bullet-points for clarity.
- The vast majority of the country-specific websites only offer English as language option: provide more language options.
- The primary navigation menu is messy and ineffectively organized: build it with less entries and more layers, avoid repetition of categories, and provide a better grouping of categories.
- Search function not optimized: enable the keyword function.

3. Gucci

- Font not always readable (especially concerning editorial content): use a Sans Serif font or use a higher size of the current Serif font.
 - No use of prompts: add prompts to prevent order interruption.
 - 404 web page does not display any alternative to the user: provide at least a button to easily go back to the home page.
- The three websites all record sluggish page speeds on computer and on mobile phones (>2 seconds): use the online tool *PageSpeed Insights* to look into the specific reasons and rectify them. Comparatively, Louis Vuitton's website is the fastest, and Hermès the slowest.
 - One best practice can be highlighted for each of the three websites:
 1. Louis Vuitton: optimized primary navigation menu organization with little entries and more layers as well as optimized grouping of categories.
 2. Hermès: the 404 page uses familiar and funny vocabulary, as well as provides two calls-to-action as alternatives.
 3. Gucci: website highly localized in that every country specific website will always offer six language options to translate the website.

SECTION 3: E-SERVICE QUALITY

- Concerning the **browsing dimension**, some areas for improvements can be highlighted for Louis Vuitton and Hermès' websites:
 - Louis Vuitton does not offer any sorting option: add at least 2 options (e.g. latest arrival, price, etc.)
 - Hermès does not offer a "view all" option in its menu which means that the user inevitably must choose a specific page.

- Hermès does not have an advanced search function in that only a few random suggestions appear when the user types a keyword: propose category propositions, photos of products, etc.
- The three websites have the following important features: shopping cart, a FAQs, and a back to top button.
- Concerning the **transaction dimension**, it is overall very optimized for the three websites:
 - Basic info (i.e. shipping and handling info, return processing info, and item availability) are available.
 - Advanced attributes (i.e. packaging info, and alternative order method) are available.
 - They all provide the maximum convenience concerning payment options, express checkout, and shipping method.
- Concerning the **company and trust dimension**, some critical areas for improvements can be highlighted for the three websites:
 - Louis Vuitton and Hermès' websites are both missing a page containing general company information: create an "about us" tab.
 - Hermès and Gucci's websites are both missing a page on company history: blatant importance to establish their story of tradition, and heritage.
 - Louis Vuitton and Hermès are both missing a code of business ethics.
- The three websites have a dedicated page about their commitment in sustainable development, environment, etc.
- The three websites all have terms of use, privacy policy, security policy and security certification available.
- Concerning the **personalization dimension**, it is overall very optimized for the three websites:
 - Basic attributes (i.e. return/exchange policy, free shipping/return, preaddressed return label, status tracing and store location) are available.
 - Upgraded services (i.e. interactive shopping aids, gift wrapping/gift message services, proposition of alternative products/matching items) are available.
 - Personalized marketing (i.e. newsletter, download the app option (except for Hermès which does not have an app)) is available.

- Some areas for improvements can be highlighted for Hermès and Louis Vuitton:
 - Hermès' website only provides phone and email as contact options: propose more options such as e.g. Louis Vuitton offers Messenger and Twitter, and Gucci offers WhatsApp and live chat.
 - Hermès is missing personalization features: add the possibility to make a Wishlist, and to “share an item” with a friend via social media/email.
 - Hermès does not have additional personalized suggestion tabs: add for instance a “must haves” tab or, a “look we love”, “designer picks”, etc.
 - Louis Vuitton and Hermès do not have a printer friendly option: add the option.
- Concerning the **product presentation dimension**, it is overall very optimized for the three websites:
 - Necessary information (i.e. size chart with international conversions, 7 or more pieces of information per product, model measurement, item code, size request, alternative color view, and at least 5 choices of images) is available.
 - Lots of different views and functions to present images (i.e. back view, side view, close-ups, full screen, zoom function, etc.) are available.
- Two best practices can be highlighted:
 - Louis Vuitton proposes a video presentation of the product: it adds a dimension of reality to the virtual.
 - Gucci proposes a quick view option on the results page enabling the user to have the basic info by only hovering over the product.
- Concerning the **website design dimension**, the three websites all use different kinds of visuals:
 - Louis Vuitton only sticks to images on the home page.
 - Hermès' website features a video on top of the home page.
 - Gucci's website uses a slider featuring a short video and images on top of the home page.
- Concerning the **entertainment dimension**, it is optimized concerning the fact that they all provide links towards their social media accounts.
- However, some additional features could be leveraged:
 - add a comprehensive designer biography on Hermès and Gucci's websites

- add style trends information on the three websites.

SECTION 4: SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

4.1. ON-PAGE OPTIMIZATION – PART 1

- Several areas of improvements can be highlighted for the three websites:
 - Louis Vuitton does not use canonical tags for 17 of its duplicate pages: choose the canonical version and add “rel=canonical” to its URL as well as on every duplicate page including the canonical one.
 - Louis Vuitton and Hermès present a lot of errors in their HTML code: resolve them by checking the free online tool *Validator w3*.
 - The three websites do not make good use of keywords in the document title tags: systematically add relevant keywords in document title tags as well as in every specific page title tag.
 - Hermès and Gucci do not leverage well the h1/h2/h3: Hermès misplaced 70h2 and Gucci used the titles of its slider as h2, which do not contain any relevant keyword.
 - Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci do not perfectly leverage the use of keywords in their description meta tags: Gucci and Hermès should add the word “luxury” and Louis Vuitton should include keywords in its US version of the website.
 - Hermès did not provide descriptions for every specific page: create a different description for each page.
- Some good practices can be highlighted for the three websites:
 - The three websites show a relatively low amount of duplicate content.
 - They all designed sitemaps and created solid URLs.
 - Louis Vuitton and Gucci’s websites both recorded a high number of backlinks as well as good score concerning the quality of the backlinks. We do not have access to this information concerning Hermès.

4.2. ON-PAGE OPTIMIZATION – PART 2: CRITERIA FOR A MOBILE RESPONSIVE WEBSITE

- Overall, the three websites all developed very optimized mobile versions of their respective websites by almost checking all the necessary categories relevant to evaluate mobile friendliness.

- However, some areas for improvements can be highlighted for Louis Vuitton and Hermès' websites respectively:
 1. Louis Vuitton: make filter option sticky.
 2. Hermès: reduce the number of entries in the menu, make the sorting option sticky, enhance search field so that it proposes quick suggestions.

SECTION 5: SOCIAL MEDIA

- **INSTAGRAM**

1. Overview

- Gucci is the most popular brand, closely followed by Louis Vuitton, leaving Hermès with a substantially lower number of followers on the page.
- Gucci and Louis Vuitton are both very active, posting every day, and Hermès posting almost every day.
- Engagement rate is overall very low for the three brands. Gucci is achieving the highest, closely followed by Louis Vuitton, and then finally Hermès.
- Gucci created three other accounts on top of its official page: one dedicated to spreading its message of social responsibility, one about its beauty line, and the last one about its osteria.

2. Features

- The three brands have created story highlights, and IGTVs.
- Hermès and Gucci have the shopping feature.
- Louis Vuitton and Gucci created filters.

3. Feed

- Louis Vuitton mainly does product promotion, giving the possibility to its users to click on the products and be directly redirected to the product specific page on the website. It also posts about events as well as other special editorial content (e.g. campaigns, engagements).
- Louis Vuitton uses hashtags and tags but not systematically.
- Gucci's posts are mainly dedicated to the promotion of new collections, with the possibility to buy the product whenever there is the "bag" icon on the post, redirecting the user to the shopping feature. The rest of the content is rather editorial (e.g. events, social actions, etc.).

- Gucci makes great use of hashtags and tags, carefully chosen for each post in a systematic and coherent way.
- Hermès' vast majority of posts are dedicated to product promotion. The rest of the sections features original and artistic content such as animations.
- Hermès uses a lot of hashtags under its posts and tags people when necessary.
- The three websites regularly share video content.

• **FACEBOOK**

1. Overview

- Louis Vuitton is the most popular brand, closely followed by Gucci, leaving Hermès with a substantially lower number of likes on the page.
- Gucci is the most active brand of the three, posting every day with Louis Vuitton being quite active as well, contrarily to Hermès posting less frequently.

2. Page information

- The three pages all contain the necessary features (i.e. company info including an overview, founding dates, link to the brand's website) as well as some extra features and information (e.g. map of the stores, calendar of events, etc.)
- Only Hermès provided a phone number on its page: Louis Vuitton and Gucci should include a phone number on the page.
- The three pages are missing direct links towards their social media accounts: the three brands should add these links.

3. Posts

- Louis Vuitton and Gucci's posts are noticeable the same as on Instagram. Their videos are usually quite short and do not generate more engagement than posts.
- Hermès posts way less than on Instagram and is creating exclusive content for Facebook, usually in the form of videos, based on the content posted on Instagram.

• **TWITTER**

1. Overview

- Louis Vuitton is the most popular brand, closely followed by Gucci, leaving Hermès with a substantially lower number of followers on the page.
- Louis Vuitton and Gucci are both very active, posting every day, contrarily to Hermès posting less frequently.

- Louis Vuitton created a feed dedicated to answering customer's queries and complaints, as well as 8 country specific pages, on top of its official account.

2. Feed

- Louis Vuitton noticeably displays the same content as on its Instagram feed, leveraging well the use of Hashtags
- Gucci mostly displays similar content to its Facebook page, adding Hashtags to its tweets.
- Hermès' posts on Twitter are different from the ones on Instagram and on Facebook: there is an emphasis on events, with a good use of Hashtags.

PART 5: CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 1: GENERAL CONCLUSION

The luxury market is growing globally. Although this growth is today mainly driven by the Asia-Pacific region, the dominating actors of the industry remain the five French flagship groups brought together to form the “KHOLC” (Kering, Hermès, L’Oréal Luxe, LVMH, and Chanel). The digital disruption is progressively changing the game for these luxury companies, providing them with an undeniable opportunity to leverage digital tools. Indeed, customers “now consider the Internet as a legitimate and trustworthy channel for purchasing luxury goods” (McKinsey & Company, 2015), and 80% of luxury sales are digitally influenced today (McKinsey&Company, 2018). What is more, the luxury customer base is evolving towards a young, highly digital, and mobile-oriented panel, that developed high expectations concerning their online shopping experience.

Considering these facts, luxury companies are today acknowledging the importance of becoming successfully digital-oriented. The choice of this thesis’s subject is thus motivated by the obvious emergency for luxury brands to achieve an efficient e-commerce, as well as to leverage social media platforms. Therefore, the key aim is to evaluate if luxury brands optimized their key digital tools to allow them to offer the best possible experience to their current and evolving panel of customers. Furthermore, the authors were intrigued to discover if any blatant difference would occur between the optimization of the digital tools of three flagships of the luxury industry, namely Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci. To meet these objectives, we formulated the following research question: *“Are the key digital tools used by fashion luxury brands well optimized today? A comparative analysis between Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci”*.

To be able to carry out the above-mentioned analysis, a precise methodology was followed. The first part of the paper consists of a literature review on the luxury industry on one hand, and on digital marketing on the other hand, in order to set up the theoretical background and basis for our analysis. The second part comprises an exploratory analysis. First, the challenge was to identify free online tools that would enable us to perform the most analytical and rigorous analysis of the company’s respective websites; eleven of them were discovered and allocated in the literature review to each specific criteria they would be able to verify and analyze.

Second, we have structured our websites analysis with the help of frameworks; besides the framework concerning the e-service quality that was built by the authors Kim & Kim (2019), we have elaborated our own frameworks for the two remain parts concerning the analysis of the websites, namely the parts on usability and on search engine marketing. The part on social media constitutes a first attempt at a descriptive analysis.

The major conclusion stemming from our analysis is the following: the three brands have done an overall good job at optimizing their digital tools, namely their respective websites and social media accounts. Comparatively, Hermès is still lagging a bit in its tool optimization and online popularity compared to Louis Vuitton and Gucci, achieving higher overall performance in line with their strategies.

More precisely, regarding the websites, the three brands all receive a good amount of traffic and earn good traffic metrics scores, but, comparatively, Hermès is left with significantly lower numbers. Coupled with the lack of optimization of some of the aspects of its website, this lagging trend from Hermès' website could be partly due to the fact that the brand is more popular amongst older age groups, less inclined to navigate online. However, the trend towards a necessary optimized digitalization of tools cannot be ignored anymore no matter the initial target group of the brand, which suggests an obvious emergency for Hermès to optimize its website. Diving more specifically into website optimization criteria, we can say that the three websites present overall good usability by meeting the majority of the criteria presented in the frameworks we developed. However, some areas for improvement can be highlighted, such as for instance, adding more language options on Louis Vuitton's website, enhance menu organization and presentation on Hermès' website and enhance font readability on Gucci's website. Then, considering the importance of e-commerce for luxury companies today, we have analyzed very thoroughly the e-service quality of each website, all performing quite good following the framework of Kim & Kim. Hermès' website is the one presenting the most areas for improvements such as for instance, adding a "view all" option in the menu, enhancing its search function to make it efficient for keyword typing and to provide suggestions, and provide more contact options than the traditional ones, etc. An overall important remark has been uncovered for the three websites: Louis Vuitton and Hermès are both missing a page containing general company information and Hermès and Gucci are both missing a page on company history, although it is crucial to establish the story of tradition and heritage and be denoted as a website of "high content". Furthermore, organic search being the primary source of traffic for luxury brands in general, SEO should not be overlooked in order for the websites to rank the

highest in the SERPs. In fact, several points can be emphasized for improvement and mainly relate to the good leveraging of keywords in the meta data. Lastly, concerning mobile responsiveness, the three brands developed mobile responsive websites answering to the vast majority of the criteria we had listed.

Regarding social media, we started by looking at some numbers to evaluate the popularity and degree of activity of the brands on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. It followed that Louis Vuitton and Gucci are quite popular, leaving Hermès with a significantly lower number of followers on the three media. Overall, the three brands are quite active on social media, posting almost daily. Regarding Instagram, the three brands made overall good use of the available features, and all managed to create a feed with an editorial look, even if product promotion constitutes the majority of the content. Looking at Facebook, the three brands contain all the necessary information, except a direct link to their other social media accounts, as well as a phone number for Louis Vuitton and Gucci. Louis Vuitton and Gucci create posts similar to the ones on Instagram (including videos), but Hermès creates exclusive content usually in the form of videos. Concerning Twitter, Louis Vuitton and Gucci's posts are noticeably the same as the ones on Facebook, while Hermès creates exclusive content with an emphasis on events. Hashtags are well leveraged by the three brands.

CHAPTER 2: LIMITS

In the context of this thesis, several limits can be brought to light. First and foremost, considering the lack of privileged access to people working in fashion luxury companies as well as to the analytical tools (e.g. Google Analytics) assessing their respective websites and social media, it was not possible to gain knowledge and collect data from the companies directly. Thereby, the analysis was entirely carried out on the basis of available sources, namely scientific literature and free online tools. The quest to finding these free online tools consisted the inherent challenge of this thesis.

Furthermore, for fashion luxury brands, the adoption of a marketing plan integrating digital tools is rather recent. Therefore, there is extensive literature on the reasons why these brands must undertake this shift, but there are not enough studies yet on how they should tackle it and optimize their digital tools. Consequently, general criteria, i.e. with no specification for fashion luxury websites, were used to evaluate the usability of the websites of Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci. Concerning the assessment of the e-service quality, we based ourselves solely on

the article of Kim & Kim as they are the only authors so far who established a list of attributes specifically tailored to fashion luxury brands websites.

Then, we encountered a limit concerning the search of a framework to guide our social media analysis. Indeed, we were not able to find precise criteria to evaluate thoroughly each brand's social media account which led to the building of a highly exploratory analysis lacking some structure. Moreover, having no privileged contact from the company prevented us from being able to interpret our numbers and findings which made the analysis highly descriptive and not as insightful as we would have hoped.

Additionally, the free online tools used to carry out the analysis usually did not give the user the choice regarding which country specific website to analyze for each brand, and so caused the analysis to be based on distinct websites. Hopefully, all the websites analyzed (the Belgian websites, the German websites, and the US websites) were almost identical in their content, structure, and layout, enabling the analysis to still be coherent and relevant.

Lastly, it is important to point out that the approach undertaken by the authors for the analysis was highly exploratory and qualitative. In fact, all the frameworks found and created originated from scientific sources, but the content of the comparative analysis, structured according to these frameworks, was based on the judgment of the authors and their own interpretation and translation of the theory into the practice.

CHAPTER 3: FUTURE RESEARCH

We could suggest several ideas of interesting future research to complement or supplement the analysis conducted in this thesis.

- First, to complement this analysis of the websites and social media, a following research could study all the remaining online communication techniques, namely online public relations, online partnerships, online display advertising, and opt-in email marketing. Furthermore, the research could also extend to the checking of the optimization of the mobile app(s), considering the increasing use of smartphones.
- Second, to supplement our comparative analysis of Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci's digital tools, we could suggest performing the same analysis for the fashion luxury House Chanel as it is part of the KHOLC and therefore represents another one of their direct

competitors, making it interesting to add it to the comparison and uncover other best practices as well as areas of improvements.

- Third, to supplement the analysis of the social media we have conducted, we could think of analyzing Chinese social media. Indeed, Chinese customers are the ones delivering the majority of luxury market growth, composed mostly of the Generation Y, highly connected and active on social media. Chinese people adopting highly different behaviors on social media than people in western countries, make Chinese social media highly intriguing to analyze for luxury brands to be able to overcome this new challenge of the growing share of Chinese people among the global panel of luxury customers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alalwan, A. A., Rana, N. P., & Dwivedi, Y. K. (2017). Social Media in Marketing: A Review and Analysis of the Existing Literature. *Telematics and Informatics*. doi:doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2017.05.008>
- Anjum, N., Sarker, M., & Ahmed, S. I. (2018, December). Evaluation of web usability requirement model and web application interface components. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Computer Science and Software Engineering*, 8(12).
- Aprilianty, F., & Nasution, R. A. (2017). The potential of Facebook utilization in women's undergarments luxury fashion brand. *The Asiand Journal of Technology Management*, 10(2), 105-121. Retrieved from <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/227725-the-potential-of-facebook-utilization-in-1a81c4d1.pdf>
- Arrigo, E. (2018). *Social media marketing in luxury brands: a systematic literature review and implications for management research*. Management Research Review. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-04-2017-0134>
- Athwal, N., Istanbuluoglu, D., & McCormack, S. E. (2018). The allure of luxury brands' social media activities: a uses and gratifications perspective. *Information Technology & People*. doi:10.1108/ITP-01-2018-0017
- Bain&Company. (2019, January 10). *The Future of Luxury: A Look into Tomorrow to Understand Today*. Retrieved from https://www.bain.com/contentassets/8df501b9f8d6442eba00040246c6b4f9/bain_digest_luxury_goods_worldwide_market_study_fall_winter_2018.pdf
- Bain&Company. (2020, February 5). *Eight themes that are rewriting the future of luxury goods*. Retrieved from https://www.bain.com/globalassets/noindex/2020/bain_digest_eight_themes_that_are_rewriting_the_future_of_luxury-goods.pdf
- Barling, N. (2015, April 22). *Are you ready for Google's mobile algorithm change?* Retrieved May 10, 2020, from <https://thenextweb.com/google/2015/04/22/are-you-ready-for-googles-mobile-algorithm-change/>
- BCG. (2016, September 22). *Digital or die: the choice for luxury brands*. Retrieved from https://image-src.bcg.com/Images/BCG-Digital-or-Die-Sep-2016_tcm9-148835.pdf
- BCG. (2018). *Growth in the Luxury Market*. Retrieved April 15, 2020, from <https://www.bcg.com/industries/consumer-products/luxury.aspx>

- Behera, R. K., Gunasekaran, A., Gupta, S., Kamboj, S., & Bala, P. K. (2020, March). Personalized digital marketing recommender engine. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 53.
- Big Commerce. (n.d.). *What are social signals? How social media impacts SEO*. Retrieved May 3, 2020, from <https://www.bigcommerce.com/ecommerce-answers/what-are-social-signals/>
- Bizadmark. (n.d.). *14 Effective Ways To Use Twitter For Fashion Brands*. Retrieved June 19, 2020, from <https://www.bizadmark.com/twitter-for-fashion-brands/>
- Bounce rate analytics: how to measure, assess, and audit to increase conversions*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 6, 2020, from <https://neilpatel.com/blog/bounce-rate-analytics/>
- Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2019). *Digital marketing: strategy, implementation and partice* (7e ed.). Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson.
- Challenges. (2014, January 31). *Patrick Thomas tire sa révérence chez Hermès*. Retrieved April 20, 2020, from https://www.challenges.fr/entreprise/patrick-thomas-tire-sa-reverence-chez-hermes_168706
- Chevalier, M., & Mazzalovo, G. (2015). *Management et Marketing du Luxe* (3e ed.). (J. Randon-Furling, Trans.) Paris, France: Dunod.
- Chiew, T. K., & Salim, S. S. (2003). WEBUSE: WEbsite USability Evalutaion tool. *Malaysian Journal of Computer Science*, pp.47-57.
- Chrome. (2020, May 27). *chrome web store*. Retrieved June 7, 2020, from <https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/similarweb-traffic-rank-w/hoklmmgfnpapgjcpechhaamimifchmp?hl=fr&gl=FR/>
- Colella, G., Amatulli, C., & Pilar Martinez-Ruiz, M. (2019, September 29). Social Media Marketing and luxury consumption: a literature review. (C. C. Education, Ed.) *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 11(4). doi:10.5539/ijms.v11n4p30
- Collins English Dictionary. (n.d.). *Definition of Fashion*. Retrieved June 20, 2020, from <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/fashion>
- Content Marketing Institute. (2017). *What is content marketing?* Retrieved May 23, 2020, from <https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/what-is-content-marketing/>

- Creusy, K. (2015, November 13). *Luxury brands on twitter | what we learned analyzing 9,849 tweets [NEW RESEARCH]*. Retrieved June 19, 2020, from <https://www.upfluence.com/content-marketing/luxury-brands-on-twitter>
- Creusy, K. (2016, January 11). *Luxury Brands Best Practices on Twitter [NEW RESEARCH]*. Retrieved June 19, 2020, from <https://www.upfluence.com/influencer-marketing/twitter-best-practices-for-luxury-brands>
- Crunchbase. (n.d.). *SimilarWeb*. Retrieved June 7, 2020, from <https://www.crunchbase.com/organization/similarweb#section-overview>
- Deloitte. (2017). *Bling it on What makes a millennial spend more?* Retrieved from https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/uk/Documents/consumer-business/deloitte-uk-young-luxury-shopper-2017.pdf?utm_source=luxe.digital&utm_campaign=luxe-digital-luxury-news
- Deloitte. (2019, May 22). *Les entreprises de luxe françaises ont vu leurs ventes décoller avec des taux de croissance à deux chiffres*. Retrieved April 22, 2020, from <https://www2.deloitte.com/fr/fr/pages/presse/2019/les-entreprises-de-luxe-francaises-ont-vu-leurs-ventes-decoller-en-2019.html>
- Delvaux ouvre sa propre boutique en ligne. (2020, April 16). *Mode* . Retrieved June 19, 2020, from <https://www.retaildetail.be/fr/news/mode/delvaux-ouvre-sa-propre-boutique-en-ligne>
- Dhaoui, C. (2014). An empirical study of luxury brand marketing effectiveness and its impact on consumer engagement on Facebook. *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing* , 5(3), 209-222. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Chedia_Dhaoui/publication/271936261_An_empirical_study_of_luxury_brand_marketing_effectiveness_and_its_impact_on_consumer_engagement_on_Facebook/links/584e252c08aeb98925264fd9.pdf
- Du, Y. (2017). *The changing mature consumer behavior of Chinese customer in luxury market*. Department of Business and Management.
- Escobar, A. (2016). The impact of the digital revolution in the development of market and communication strategies for the luxury sector (fashion luxury). *Central European Business Review*, 5(2), 17-36.
- Gaudiaut, T. (2020, June 8). *Combien y a-t-il de sites Internet?* Retrieved July 7, 2020, from <https://fr.statista.com/infographie/19063/nombre-de-sites-web-internet-dans-le-monde/>

- GetApp. (n.d.). *BuzzSumo*. Retrieved June 18, 2020, from <https://fr.getapp.be/software/101607/buzzsumo>
- Giomelakis, D., & Veglis, A. (2016). Investigating search engine optimization factors in media websites: the case of Greece. *Digital Journalism*, 4(3), 379-400. doi:10.1080/21670811.2015.1046992
- Godey, B., Manthiou, A., Pederzoli, D., Rokka, J., Aiello, G., Donvito, R., & Singh, R. (2016). Social media marketing efforts of luxury brands: influence on brand equity and consumer behavior. *Journal of business research*, 69(12), 5833-5841.
- Hanania, Y., Musnik, I., & Gaillochet, P. (2019). *Le luxe demain*. France: Dunod.
- Heine, K. (2012). The concept of luxury brands. 100. Retrieved from https://dlwqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/48829805/Heine_TheConceptofLuxuryBrands.pdf?1473859186=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DDefinition_and_Categorization_of_Luxury.pdf&Expires=1592590460&Signature=SDT8EYi58h7gUGLDV3K3EMBRZKgVUr5aR1UOEj
- Hermès. (2019). *2019 universal registration document*. Retrieved from <https://finance.hermes.com/var/finances/storage/original/application/098b0de969efabaace34b1a1c43e2a72.pdf>
- Indigo Stream Technologies. (2020). Retrieved April 10, 2020, from <http://www.siteliner.com/about>
- Johansson, E. (2019). *Adapting the web*. Karlskrona: Blekinge Institute of Technology. Retrieved from urn:nbn:se:bth-17996
- Kapferer, J.-N., & Bastien, V. (2009, September 12). The specificity of luxury management: turning marketing upside down. *Journal of Brand Management*, 16(5/6), 311-322. doi:10.1057/bm.2008.51
- Katheleys. (n.d.). *Hermès*. Retrieved March 15, 2020, from <https://katheleys.com/en/content/18-hermes>
- Kering. (2020, February 12). 2019 full-year results. Retrieved from <https://keringcorporate.dam.kering.com/m/6172e7ee055964f0/original/Resultats-annuels-2019-en-anglais-.pdf>

- Kering. (2020). *A propos de Kering et chiffres clés*. Retrieved March 16, 2020, from <https://www.kering.com/fr/finance/a-propos-de-kering/>
- Kering. (n.d.). *Découvrez Kering*. Retrieved March 16, 2020, from <https://www.kering.com/fr/groupe/decouvrez-kering/>
- Kim, J.-H., & Kim, M. (2018, September 22). Conceptualization and assessment of E-service quality for luxury brands. *Service industries*. doi:10.1080/02642069.2018.1517755
- Ko, E., Costello, J. P., & Taylor, C. R. (2019). What is a luxury brand? A new definition and review of the literature. *Journal of Business Research*, 99, 405-413. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.08.023>
- La finance pour tous. (2019, December 6). *GAFa, GAFAM ou NATU: les nouveaux maîtres du monde*. Retrieved March 25, 2020, from <https://www.lafinancepourtous.com/decryptages/finance-et-societe/nouvelles-economies/gafa-gafam-ou-natu-les-nouveaux-maitres-du-monde/>
- La finance pour tous. (2019, July 26). *Le CAC 40, qu'est ce que c'est ?* Retrieved April 20, 2020, from <https://www.lafinancepourtous.com/decryptages/marches-financiers/acteurs-de-la-finance/bourse/le-cac-40/le-cac-40-qu-est-ce-que-c-est/>
- Lali, M., Mehr, K. A., Ul Mustafa, R., & Ali, U. (2018). *Enhancing knowledge and bounce rate in SERPs using micro-data*. hal archives ouvertes.
- Lazaris, C., & Vrechopoulos, A. (2014, June). From Multichannel to “Omnichannel” Retailing: review of the literature and calls for research. *2nd International Conference on Contemporary Marketing Issues*, 6.
- Lenslist. (2020). *I see you*. Retrieved June 29, 2020, from <https://lenslist.co/i-see-you/>
- Leong, A. (2020, May 21). Louis Vuitton spreads hope and happiness across the world with the rainbow project. *L'Officiel*. Retrieved June 29, 2020, from <https://www.lofficielarabia.com/fashion/louis-vuitton-spreads-hope-and-happiness-across-the-world-with-the-rainbow-project>
- Lexico. (n.d.). *bounce rate*. Retrieved May 3, 2020, from https://www.lexico.com/definition/bounce_rate
- Li, K., Lin, M., & Lin, Z. (2014). Running and chasing - the competition between paid search marketing and search engine optimization. *47th Hawaii International Conference on System Science*. Hawaii.

- Liang, Y., Ghosh, S., & Oe, H. (2017). Chinese consumers' luxury value perceptions - a conceptual model. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*.
- LVMH. (2019, December 31). Translation of the French financial documents. Retrieved from https://r.lvmh-static.com/uploads/2019/12/lvmh_documents-financiers_2019-va.pdf
- LVMH. (2020). *Indicateurs financiers*. Retrieved March 17, 2020, from LVMH, leader mondial des produits de haute qualité: <https://www.lvmh.fr/actionnaires/profil/chiffres-cles/#groupe>
- LVMH. (2020, January 28). *Record results for LVMH in 2019*. Retrieved March 17, 2020, from LVMH, leader mondial des produits de qualité: <https://www.lvmh.com/news-documents/press-releases/record-results-for-lvmh-in-2019/>
- LVMH. (n.d.). *Gouvernance*. Retrieved March 13, 2020, from LVMH, leader mondial des produits de haute qualité: <https://www.lvmh.fr/groupe/identite/gouvernance/comite-executif/>
- LVMH. (n.d.). *L'entreprise LVMH*. Retrieved March 13, 2020, from LVMH, leader mondial des produits de haute qualité: <https://www.lvmh.fr/groupe/identite/lentreprise-lvmh/>
- Maman Larraufie, A.-F., & Kourdoughli, A. (2014). The e-semiotics of luxury. *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, 5(3), 197-208. Retrieved from <http://archives.marketing-trends-congress.com/2014/pages/PDF/268.pdf>
- Management Association Information Resources. (2018). *Digital marketing and consumer engagement: concepts, methodologies, tools, and applications*. (I. Global, Ed.) Retrieved from <https://books.google.be/books?id=MTdCDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA723&lpg=PA723&dq=twitter+for+luxury+brands&source=bl&ots=Yf3zOCH3fe&sig=ACfU3U1HiwxJVC3gV94kg8BjedYJ9ZcUA&hl=fr&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjrmJyj2I3qAhVKm6QKHYOxDoQ4ChDoATACegQICBAB#v=onepage&q=twitter%20for%20luxu>
- Manikonda, L., Venkatesan, R., Kambhampati, S., & Li, B. (2015). *Evolution of fashion brands on Twitter and Instagram*. Récupéré sur <https://arxiv.org/pdf/1512.01174v1.pdf>
- Marketing Insider Group. (2018, August 9). *Why social media is important for business marketing*. Retrieved July 4, 2020, from <https://marketinginsidergroup.com/content-marketing/why-social-media-is-important-for-business->

marketing/#:~:text=Social%20media%20is%20an%20essential,month%2C%20it's%20no%20passing%20trend.

McKinsey & Company. (2015). *The opportunity in online luxury fashion*. Retrieved May 25, 2020, from <http://www.mckinseyonmarketingandsales.com/the-opportunity-in-online-luxury-fashion>

McKinsey & Company. (2019). *China Luxury Report 2019: how young Chinese consumers are reshaping global luxury*. Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/china/how%20young%20chinese%20consumers%20are%20reshaping%20global%20luxury/mckinsey-china-luxury-report-2019-how-young-chinese-consumers-are-reshaping-global-luxury.ashx>

McKinsey&Company. (2014). *Luxury shopping in the digital age. Perspectives on retail and Consumer Goods*. Retrieved from <http://sipepdesign.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/McKinsey-Study-Luxury-shopping-in-the-digital-age.pdf>

McKinsey&Company. (2015). *Digital inside: Get wired for the ultimate luxury experience*. Retrieved from http://vietnamsupplychain.com/assets/files/562451c67cbbbDigital_inside_full_PDF.pdf

McKinsey&Company. (2018). *The age of digital Darwinism*.

Milled. (2020, May 19). *Congratulations, 2020 Graduates*. Retrieved June 29, 2020, from https://milled.com/Gucci/congratulations-2020-graduates-_PMhVGMG4xhbYnzy

Moran, K. (2019, December 1). *Usability testing 101*. Retrieved May 15, 2020, from Nielsen Norman Group: <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/usability-testing-101/>

Moz. (n.d.). *Alt Text*. Retrieved May 10, 2020, from <https://moz.com/learn/seo/alt-text>

Nielsen, J. (2000, March 18). *Why you only need to test with 5 users*. Retrieved April 23, 2020, from Nielsen Norman Group: <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/why-you-only-need-to-test-with-5-users/>

O'Connell, L. (2020, February 3). *Value of the global personal luxury goods market 1996-2019*. Retrieved March 18, 2020, from Statista: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/266503/value-of-the-personal-luxury-goods-market-worldwide/>

- PageSpeed Insights. (n.d.). *Améliorez la vitesse de chargement de vos pages sur tous les appareils*. Retrieved July 4, 2020, from <https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/?hl=fr>
- Pharr, J. M. (2017). *Using digital content marketing to build the college brand: leveraging a content-rich website into a distinctive university brand*. Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1193&context=ama_proceedings
- Pletikosa Cvijikj, I. (2012). *Evaluation framework for social media brand presence*. ETH Zürich, Zürich. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-a-007599194>
- Reamonn, D. (2019). Simple ideas for a great website. *Class on technology and design for digital marketing*. Dublin: University College Dublin .
- Romao, M. T., Moro, S., Rita, P., & Ramos, P. (2018). Leveraging a luxury fashion brand through social media. *European Research on Management and Business Economics*, 25(1), 15-22. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iedeen.2018.10.002>
- Rouse, M. (2012, October). *alt text (alternative text)*. Retrieved March 30, 2020, from <https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/alt-text-alternative-text>
- Rouse, M. (2019, December). *metadata*. Retrieved March 30, 2020, from <https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/metadata>
- SimilarWeb. (n.d.). Retrieved February 13, 2020, from <https://www.similarweb.com/>
- Sitechecker. (2020). *Faire un Analyse SEO site internet gratuit et obtenez le score SEO*. Retrieved June 7, 2020, from <https://sitechecker.pro/fr/>
- solarwinds pingdom. (n.d.). *Pingdom Website Speed Test*. Retrieved June 25, 2020, from <https://tools.pingdom.com/#5cbab93d1ac00000>
- Som, A., & Blanckaert, C. (2015). *The road to luxury: The evolution, markets and strategies of luxury brand management*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Statista. (2020, April 30). *Number of Facebook users worldwide 2008-2020*. Retrieved June 8, 2020, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/264810/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/#:~:text=How%20many%20users%20does%20Facebook,network%20ever%20to%20do%20so.>

- Steimie, J. (2013). Why your business needs a responsive website before 2014. *Forbes*. Retrieved March 10, 2020, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/joshsteimle/2013/11/08/why-your-business-needs-a-responsive-website-before-2014/#31e541ad1e83>
- Synchrone. (2016, November 17). *Analysez les sujets les plus performants pour vos news avec BuzzSumo*. Retrieved June 18, 2020, from https://www.synchrone.be/fr/news/325_analysez-les-sujets-les-plus-performants-pour-vos-news-avec-buzzsumo
- Techopedia. (2020, May 18). *Snippet*. Retrieved from <https://www.techopedia.com/definition/5472/snippet-programming>
- Techopedia. (s.d.). *Website Security Certificate*. Consulté le June 24, 2020, sur <https://www.techopedia.com/definition/29743/website-security-certificate>
- TechTerms. (2015). *HTML*. Retrieved May 22, 2020, from <https://techterms.com/definition/html>
- Think with Google. (2016, October). *Test My Site*. Retrieved July 4, 2020, from <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/intl/fr-fr/solutions/outils/test-my-site/>
- Tynan, C., McKechnie, S., & Chhuon, C. (2010, November). Co-creating value for luxury brands. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(11), 1156-1163. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.10.012
- UsabilityHub. (n.d.). *An introduction to five second testing*. Retrieved March 31, 2020, from <https://usabilityhub.com/guides/five-second-testing>
- Vinerean, S. (2017). Content marketing strategy. Definitions, objectives and tactics. *Expert Journal of Marketing*, 5(2), 92-98.
- Vinerean, S., & Opreana, A. (2019). Social Media Marketing efforts of luxury brands on Instagram. *Expert Journal of Marketing*, 7(2), 144-152.
- Vogue. (2008, January 1). *Gucci, 90 ans de luxe italien*. Retrieved March 11, 2020, from <https://www.vogue.fr/communaute/wiki-de-la-mode/articles/gucci-90-ans-de-luxe-italien/20599>

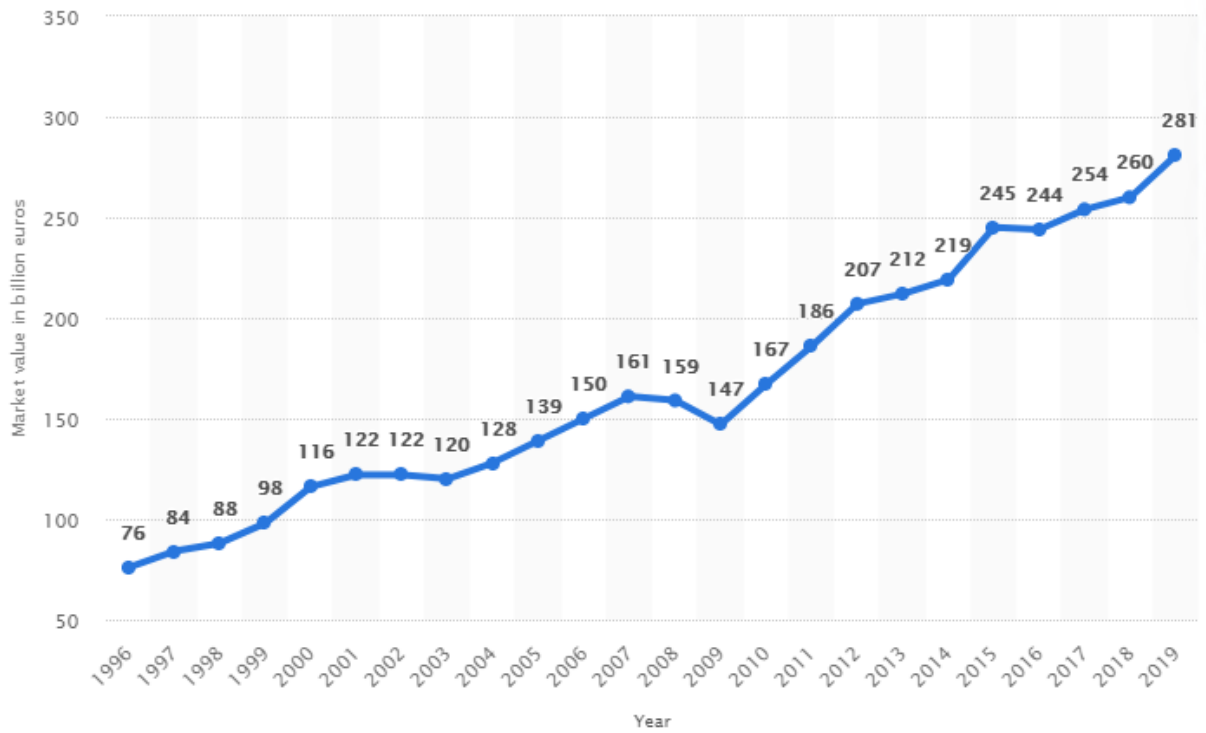
- Vogue. (2008, January 1). *Hermès, la boutique de luxe au célèbre carré de soie*. Retrieved March 11, 2020, from <https://www.vogue.fr/communaute/wiki-de-la-mode/articles/herms-la-boutique-de-luxe-au-clbre-carr-de-soie/20604>
- Vogue. (2008, January 1). *Louis Vuitton, emblème du luxe à la française*. Retrieved March 10, 2020, from <https://www.vogue.fr/communaute/wiki-de-la-mode/articles/louis-vuitton-emblme-du-luxe-la-franaise/20614>
- W3C. (n.d.). *Markup validation service*. Retrieved May 25, 2020, from <https://validator.w3.org/>
- WebAim. (n.d.). *WAVE Web accessibility evaluation tool*. Retrieved April 1, 2020, from <https://wave.webaim.org/>
- WebFx. (n.d.). *How to improve your site's search function*. Retrieved June 24, 2020, from <https://www.webfx.com/blog/web-design/improve-site-search/>
- Webopedia. (n.d.). *average time on site - web analytics*. Retrieved from https://www.webopedia.com/TERM/A/average_time_on_site.html
- Wix. (n.d.). *Using the Google mobile-friendly testing tool*. Retrieved April 2, 2020, from <https://support.wix.com/en/article/using-the-google-mobile-friendly-testing-tool>
- Woorank. (n.d.). *Gucci.com*. Retrieved June 14, 2020, from <https://www.woorank.com/fr/www/gucci.com>
- Woorank. (n.d.). *Test SEO instantané et outils d'audit*. Retrieved June 7, 2020, from <https://www.woorank.com/fr>
- Wordstream. (n.d.). *Conversion rate: what is a conversion rate?* Retrieved July 6, 2020, from <https://www.wordstream.com/conversion-rate>
- Ziakis, C., Vlachopoulou, M., Kyrkoudis, T., & Karagkiozidou, M. (2019, January 30). Important factors for improving Google Search Rank. *Future Internet*, 11(2), p. 32. doi:10.3390/fi11020032
- Zone bourse. (2019). *Hermès International (RMS)*. Retrieved March 11, 2020, from <https://www.zonebourse.com/HERMES-INTERNATIONAL-4657/societe/>
- Zone bourse. (2019). *Kering (KE)*. Retrieved March 12, 2020, from <https://www.zonebourse.com/KERING-4683/societe/>

Zone bourse. (2019). *LVMH Moët Hennessy - Louis Vuitton SE (MC)*. Retrieved March 12, 2020, from <https://www.zonebourse.com/LVMH-MOET-HENNESSY-LOUI-4669/societe/>

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

Value of the personal luxury goods market worldwide from 1996 to 2019 (in billion euros)



Source: O'Connell (2020)

APPENDIX 2

E-service framework

E-service dimensions	E-service attributes		Company 1		Company 2		Company 3	
			Unavailable	Available	Unavailable	Available	Unavailable	Available
Browsing dimension	Advanced search function	Unavailable						
		1 option available						
		2 options available						
		3 options available						
		4 or more options available						
	Filter items (by color, size, style, price, etc.)	Unavailable						
		1 option available						
		2 options available						
		3 options available						
	Browsing option (by page, view all, by product, etc.)	Unavailable						
		1 option available						
		2 options available						
		3 options available						
	Search engine (by key word, product number)	Unavailable						

		1 option available						
		2 options available						
	Shopping cart							
	Sitemap							
	FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)							
	Browsing instructions							
	Browser requirement							
	Dead links	Yes						
		No						
	Back to top							
Transaction dimension	Order instructions							
	Multiple order option							
	Alternative order method	Unavailable						
		By telephone						
		By telephone and mail						
	Order from catalog	Unavailable						
		Available						
	Express checkout							
	Guest checkout							
	Item availability							
	Promotional codes							
	Shipping method info.	Unavailable						
		Standard shipping only						

		Express shipping only						
		Both						
	Shipping option	To me only						
		To 1 alternative address						
		To multiple addresses						
	Payment options	1 option available						
		2 options available						
		3 options available						
		4 or more options available						
	Shipping & handling							
	Refund processing info.							
	Packaging info.							
	Sales tax							
	International shipping	Unavailable						
		Available						
		Only to Belgium						
		Only to France						
Company and trust dimension	Company history							
	General company information							
	Term of use							
	Recall information							
	Affiliate program							

	Investor relations							
	Business ethics							
	Press release							
	Privacy policy							
	Security policy							
	Security certification							
	Corporate social responsibility							
Personalization dimension	Satisfaction guarantee							
	Return/exchange policy							
	Free shipping	Unavailable						
		Standard free shipping on all order						
		Standard free shipping over a certain amount						
	Free return							
	Pre-addressed return label							
	Order status tracking							
	Store location							
	Company contacts	1 option available (email or telephone)						
		2 options available						
		3 options available						
		4 options available (email, phone, fax, and mail)						

	Interactive shopping aid	Unavailable						
		Live help						
		email						
	Alteration service							
	Gift wrapping							
	Gift card/message							
	Gift receipts							
	E-gift card/certificates							
	E-store credit card							
	Suggestions for items	Unavailable						
		Alternative products						
		matching products						
		Both						
	Promotions	Unavailable						
		1 type of promotion						
		2 types of promotion						
		3 types of promotion						
		4 or more types of promotion						
	Wish list							
	Share an item with friends	Unavailable						
		Email only						
		Social networking sites only						
		Both						
	Printer friendly option							
	Catalog request							
	Account management							

	Links to alternative sites							
	Share designer favorites	Must-haves						
		Look we love						
		Designer picks						
	Newsletter signup							
	Download App for Mobile							
Product presentation dimension	Size chart	Unavailable						
		Measurement only						
		Measurement with international conversion (IC)						
		Measurement and measurement guide						
		Measurement with IC and measurement guide						
	Product descriptions (# of pieces of information)	3 (basic info: color, size, price)						
		4 (basic info + 1 more)						
		5 (basic info + 2 more)						
		6 (basic info + 3 more)						
		7 (basic info + 4 more)						
	Model measurement							

	Item code (style #)							
	Size request							
	Quick look							
	Back view							
	Side view							
	Larger view							
	3-D rotation							
	Close-ups							
	Magnified view (rollover image)							
	Zoom function							
	Full screen							
	Virtual model							
	Video presentation							
	Customer review & rate							
	Number of alternative images	None						
		1 alternative images						
		2 alternative images						
		3 alternative images						
		4 alternative images						
		More than 5						
	Presented on mannequin							
	Presented on model							
	Presented on hanger							
	Presented as flat							
	Picture size							
	Fabric swatches							
	Close-ups fabric swatches							
	Alternative color view							
		Consistent						

	Consistency of presentation	Inconsistent						
	Consistency of image size	Consistent						
		Inconsistent						
Website design dimension	Background music							
	Flash intro							
	Graphic intro							
	Video intro							
	Brand logos							
Entertainment dimension	Style trend info.							
	Designer biography							
	Social networks	Unavailable						
		1 option available						
		2 options available						
		3 options available						
		4 or more options available						
	Retailer blog							
	Coupon on social networks							
	Online survey							

Source: Kim & Kim (2018)

APPENDIX 3

 Usability testing – info on participants

Name	Participant number	Nationality	Sex	Age
Spitaleri, Hugo	1	Belgian & Italian	Male	23
Mendolia, Francesco	2	Italian	Male	23
Lembi Bonheur, Heurjonie	3	Belgian	Female	22
Verzar, Stéphanie	4	Belgian	Female	23
Lanaud-Harding, Grian	5	French & Irish	Female	22

APPENDIX 4

Screenshots of product details on the websites of Louis Vuitton, Hermès, and Gucci

Detailed features

41.0 x 34.0 x 19.0 cm

(Length x Height x Width)

- L 41 x H 34 x W 19 cm/L 16.1 x H 13.4 x W

7.5 inches

- Red
- Monogram coated canvas
- Cowhide leather trim
- Textile lining
- Silver-colour hardware
- 2 Toron top handles for hand or elbow carry
- 2 long leather shoulder straps (drop: 28 cm/11 inches) for shoulder carry
- Flat zipped pocket inside



Louis Vuitton

DANS LE DÉTAIL

**En savoir plus sur le veau Epsom**

Ce cuir imprimé porte le nom d'une ville du sud-est de l'Angleterre, célèbre pour ses courses hippiques. Son grain fin et régulier, obtenu par impression mécanique, présente un double ton très marqué d'une belle subtilité.

Entrée en collection : 2004

Aspect visuel : Petit grain régulier et légèrement brillant, uniforme, couleurs profondes

Toucher : Sec, avec un grain à léger double niveau

Main : Ronde et ferme

Evolution dans le temps : Garde sa tenue, résiste à la rayure. Le grain s'estompe aux endroits de forte sollicitation ou de frottement



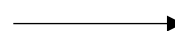
Hermès

DÉTAILS DU PRODUIT

Modèle 400249 KHNRN 9769

Une boucle tête de tigre texturée apporte la touche décorative parfaite à ce sac structuré. Sa bandoulière chaîne coulissante permet de le porter à l'épaule ou à la main.

- Toile Suprême GG beige/ébène, une matière à faible impact sur l'environnement, avec détail en daim noir
- Finitions couleur argent vieilli
- Boucle détachable par pression latérale
- Boucle tête de tigre
- Bords peints à la main
- Compartiment intérieur zippé
- Poche sous le rabat
- Deux soufflets
- Bandoulière chaîne coulissante hauteur 38cm, modulable en anse hauteur 22cm
- Poids : environ 0,6kg
- Petite taille : L 28cm x H 17cm x P 9cm



Gucci

Louis Vuitton 404 web page

 Ship to : Belgium
 [Can we help you?](#)
 +32 2 626 46 03






LOUIS VUITTON

[NEW](#)
[WOMEN](#)
[MEN](#)
[ART OF LIVING](#)
[MAGAZINE](#)

 Search "Father's Day Gifts" here



Page not found

We apologize, we cannot find the page you are looking for. Please contact our Client Services or navigate to another page. Thank you.

Need more help?

 Email us

 Chat to us

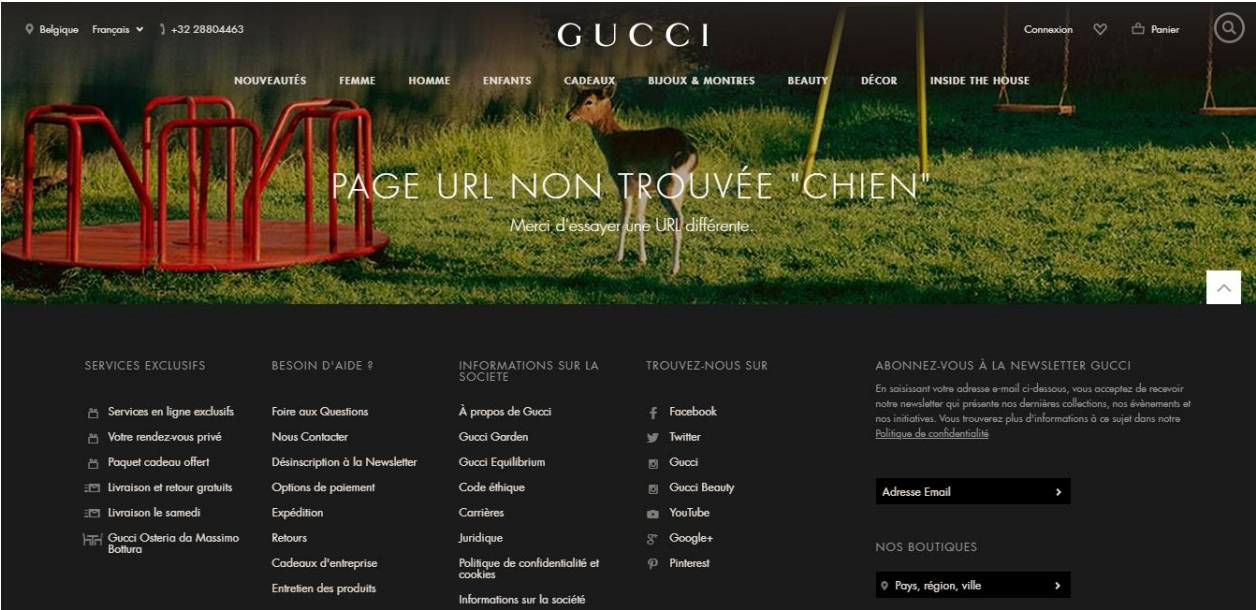

[Client Services](#)
 +32 2 626 46 03

 Find a store

Hermès 404 web page

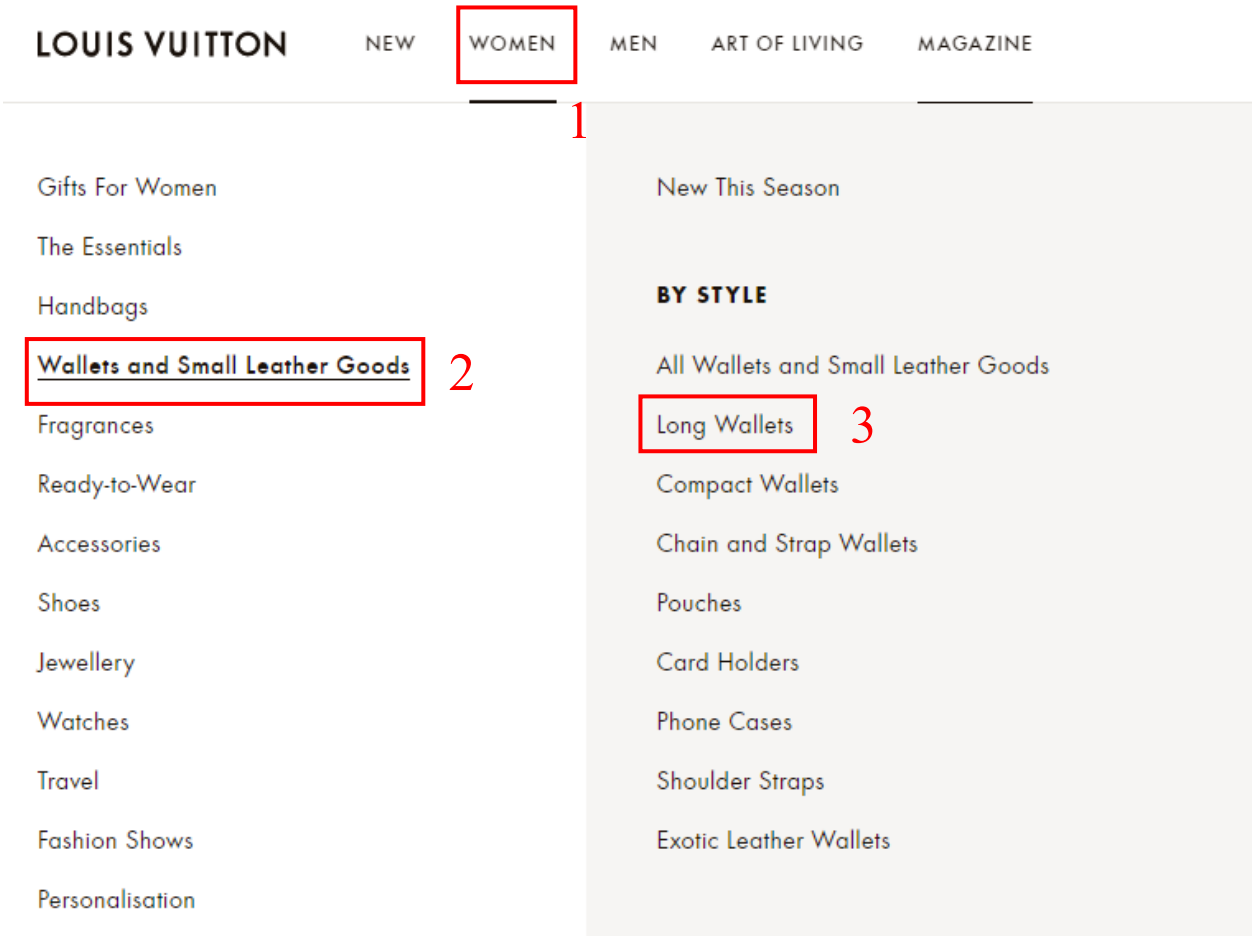


Gucci 404 web page



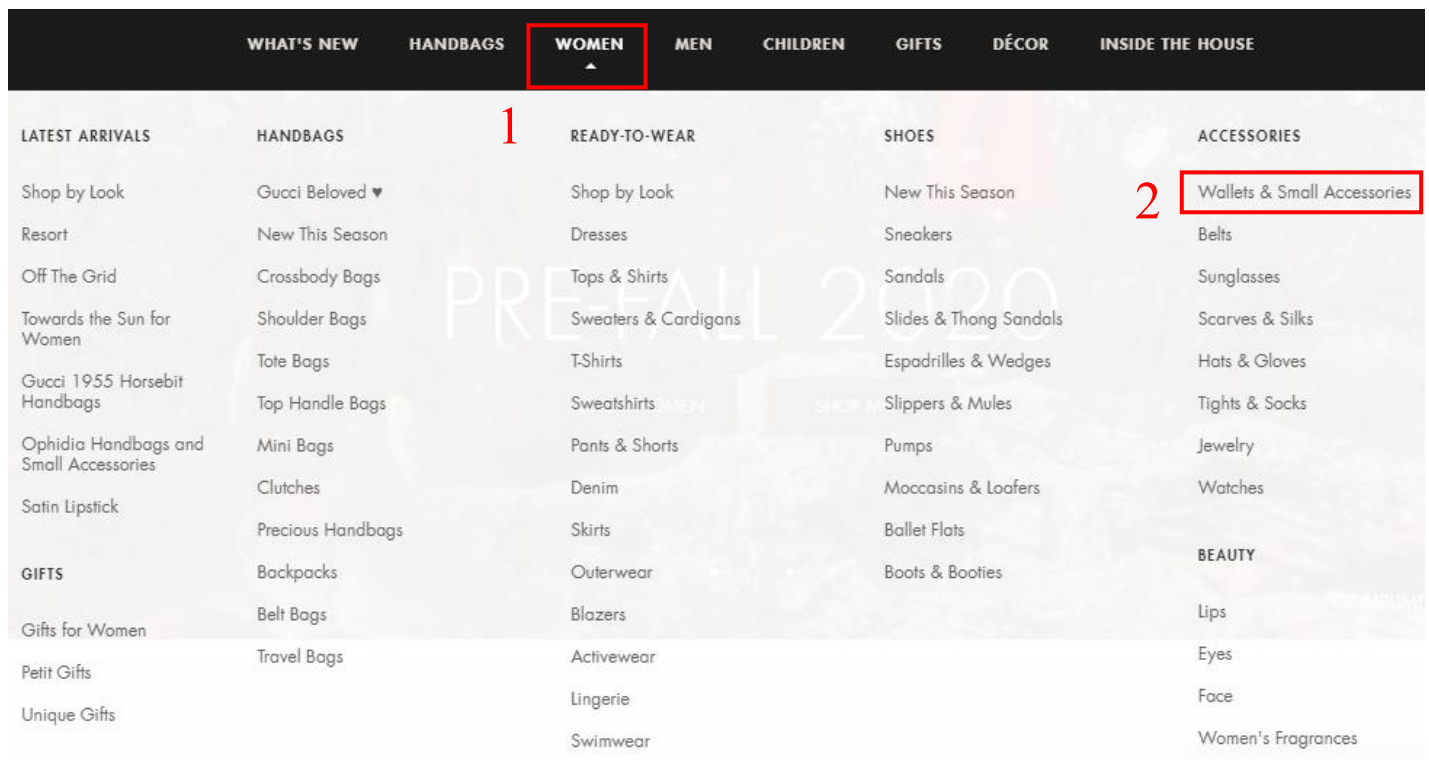
APPENDIX 6

Louis Vuitton's primary navigation menu



APPENDIX 7

Gucci's primary navigation menu



APPENDIX 8

Hermès' primary navigation menu

× MENU	
WOMEN	+
MEN	+
HOME	+
JEWELRY	+
FASHION JEWELRY	+
WATCHES	+
FRAGRANCES	+
MAKE-UP	+
SHOES	+
BAGS AND SMALL LEATHER GOODS	+
SCARVES AND SILK ACCESSORIES	+
EQUESTRIAN	+
TIES AND POCKET SQUARES	
PETIT H	
READING AND WRITING	+
BABY GIFTS	

APPENDIX 9

Hermès' subcategories of the category "women" in the primary navigation menu

