DOOR 3

Voxel

Competitive Analysis

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Competitors

Competitive Selection

Description

Amazon web services (AWS), Rackspace and Softlayer represent the business incumbents in the server provider market. They represent the direct competition of Voxel. Being a direct competitor, these were the three websites that were explored for direct competitor analysis.

Selected Competitors Description

Rackspace

Rackspace was founded in 1998, originally as a small ISP in founder Richard Yoo's garage. He paired up with two others, Dirk Elmendorf and Patrick Condon, and began offering internet application development for end user clients. They soon discovered that there was a solid market for hosting services with a strong focus on customer service and support. In fact, "fanatical support" has recently become Rackspace's main selling point that differentiates them from their competitors.

Softlayer

Softlayer Technologies, Inc. provides Web hosting and on-demand services. It offers single processor multi core, dual processor legacy core, dual processor multi core, quad processor multi core, express, and specialty servers, as well as enterprise racks. The company also provides hardware, network, monitoring/notification/response, software, storage layer, and backup services.
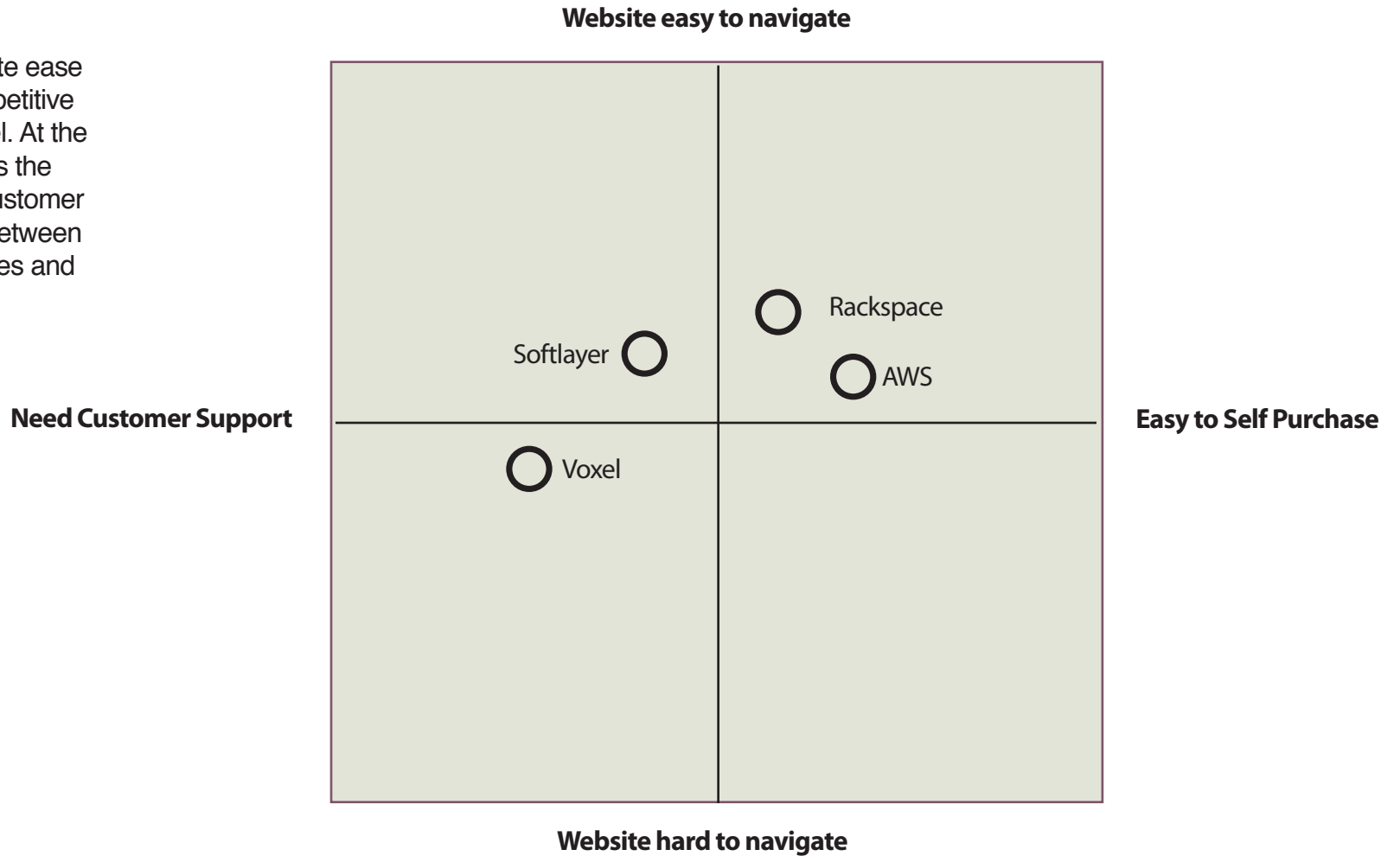
AWS

Amazon Web Services, LLC provides infrastructure Web services platform in the cloud to companies. It offers Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2); Amazon Elastic MapReduce, a Web service enabling businesses, researchers, data analysts, and developers to process various data; and Auto Scaling to scale Amazon EC2 capacity up down according to conditions.

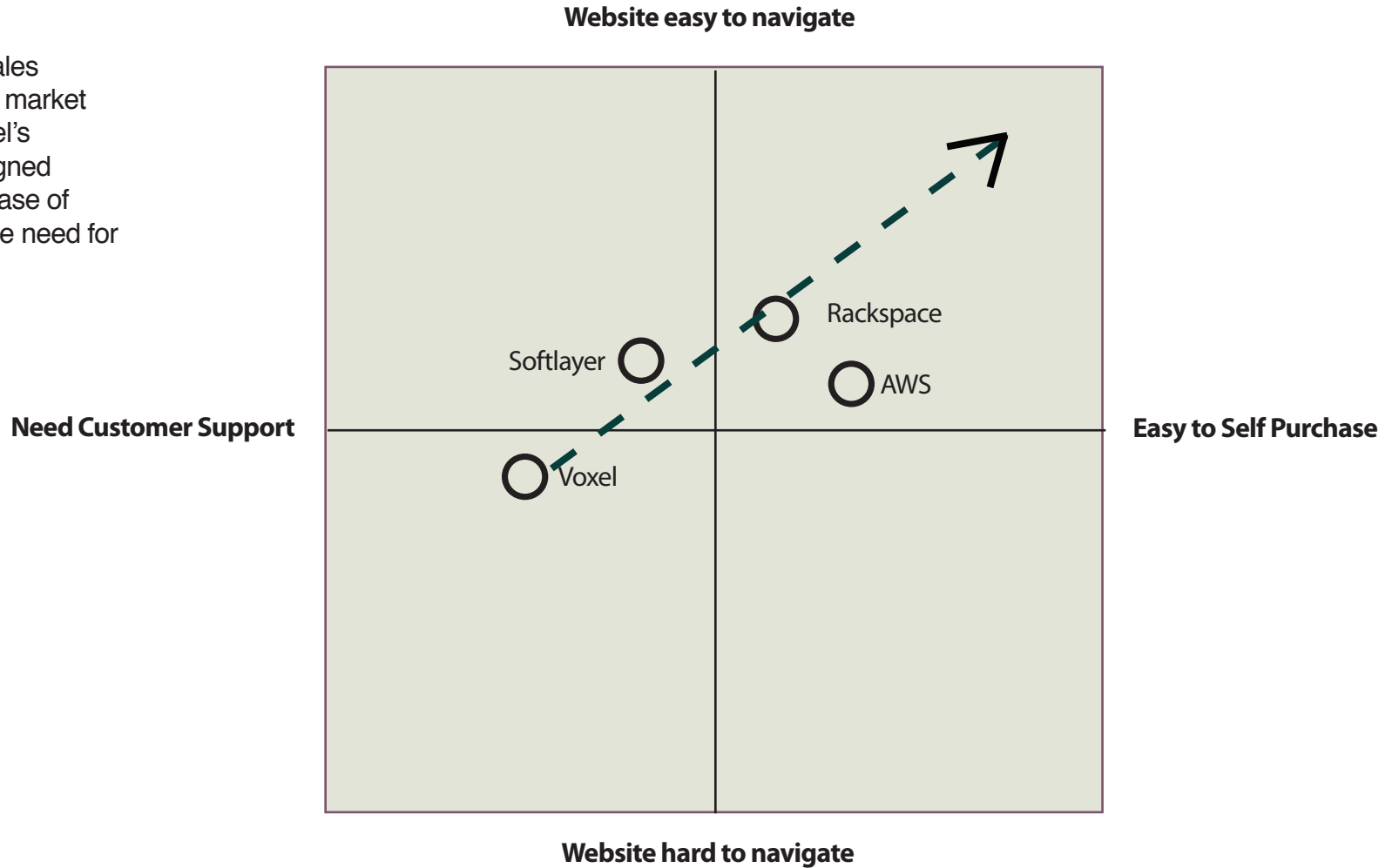# Comparisons

Two-by-two

Description

Compares the website ease of use between competitive companies and Voxel. At the same time, compares the needed amount of customer service experience between competitive companies and Voxel.

Website easy to navigate

Need Customer Support

Softlayer ◯

Rackspace ◯

AWS ◯

Voxel ◯

Easy to Self Purchase

Website hard to navigate

Phase 1

Description

In order to increase sales revenue and increase market competitiveness, Voxel's website will be redesigned focusing on website ease of use and eliminating the need for customer service.

Website easy to navigate

Need Customer Support

Easy to Self Purchase

Rackspace

Softlayer

AWS

Voxel

Website hard to navigate

Website Criteria Ratings

Criteria	Voxel	AWS	Rackspace	Softlayer
Design				
Look and feel	★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★
Navigation	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★
Images	★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★
Customer service				
Chat experience	★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★★
Necessary for product understanding	★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★
Usability				
Find a product	★★	★★	★★★	★★★
Buy a product	★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★
Understand product	★★★	★★	★★★	★★★

Voxel SWOT Analysis

Description

SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats involved in a business venture.

Strengths

Attributes of the person or company that are helpful to achieving the objective(s).

Weaknesses

Attributes of the person or company that are harmful to achieving the objective(s).

Opportunities

External conditions that are helpful to achieving the objective(s).

Threats

External conditions which could do damage to the objective(s).

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
• Value of product • Quality of product • Customizable • Efficiency • Technologically advanced • Scalability	• User not understanding product • Poor navigation • Hidden portal • Poor user path of purchasing • Need for customer service
• Online growth • CoBranding • International market • Service expansion	• Improved competitor websites • Improved competitor products • Improved competitor customer service
Opportunities	**Threats**

Heuristic Evaluations

Voxel Visual Comparison

Clean design

Clearly labeled headers

Nice images

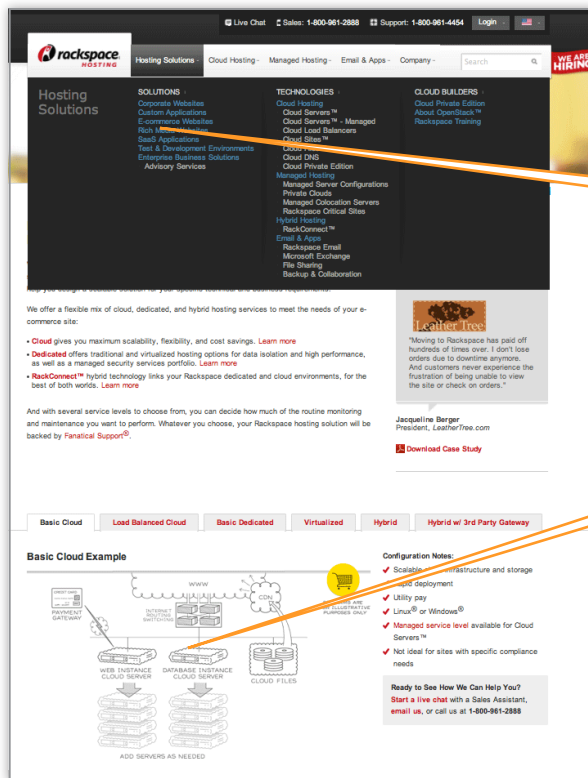Small link titles

Lack of layout consistency

Strengths

- Uses applicable images geared towards company (users or company products)

- Keeps chat and contact number constantly apparent

- Offers an iPhone application for user to access their account

Weaknesses

- "Provisioning" should be changed to "Instance" for industry standard

- Does not constantly provide a way to purchase products

- Should provide more meaningful product descriptions

- The shopping cart should be in view at all times

- The portal should be more accessible

Rackspace Visual Comparison

Clean design

Proper use of mega menu

Descriptive drawings

Inconsistent page color scheme
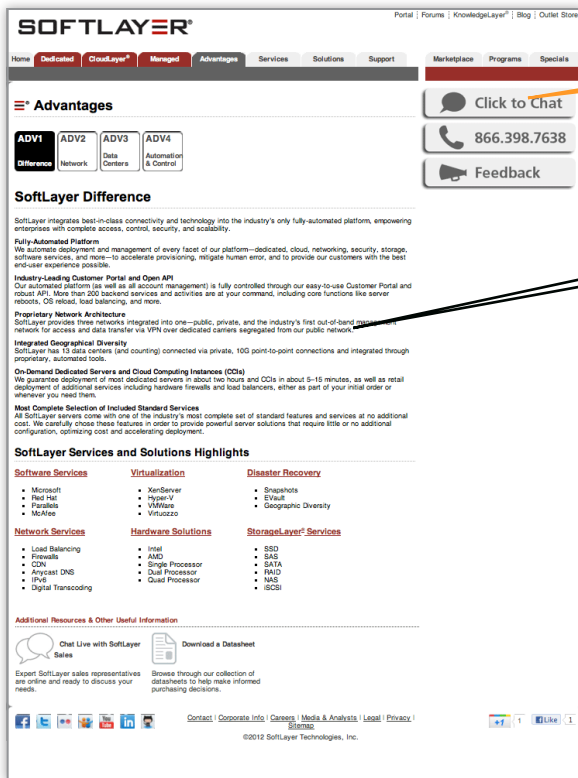
Comparison grid

Strengths

- Uses applicable images geared towards company (users or company products)

- Implements a menu that follows the page as the user scrolls

- Has a well designed comparison chart

- Keeps chat and contact number constantly apparent

Weaknesses

- Does not use a consistent color scheme

- Does not constantly provide a way to purchase products

- Difficult to read blue links with a black background in the menu

- Very repetitive content and links

- Does not have a place for sign up

- Does not constantly provide a place to purchase

- Has three different portals

Softlayer Visual Comparison

Large buttons for customer support

Layout is very text heavy and busy

Not many images

Two different ways to choose set up, across top and down. Also the button to close and open is the maroon button at the bottom. Not intuitive.

Strengths

• Large customer support button

• Portal is easily accessible

• Easy to build a personalized cloud
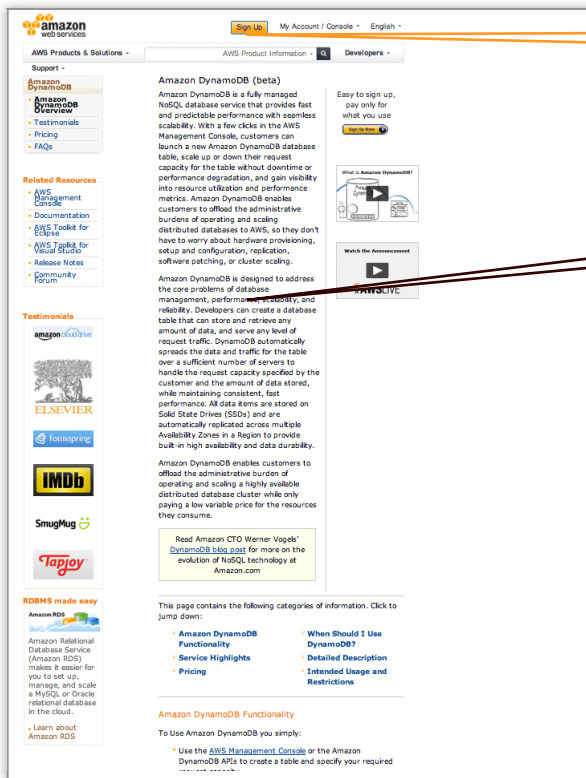
• Do not have to sign up in order to build order

Weaknesses

• Layout is very text heavy

• Layout is very busy

• Not always apparent where to buy

• Chat icon is far from main page content

• Confusing how to select options because it is done in two different ways

AWS Visual Comparison

Sign up is very apparent

Very text heavy and busy

Contact is hidden

Mega menu

Strengths

- Uses the word "Instances" for products
- Good use of mega footer
- Sign up is apparent
- Contains forum in support
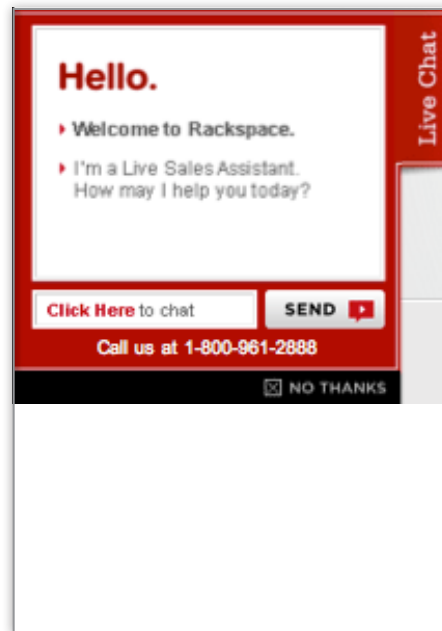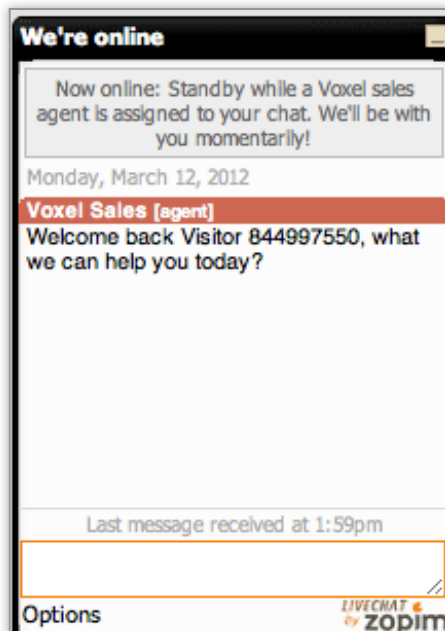- Offers a step by step walk through to build

Weaknesses

- Layout is very text heavy
- Requires reading to find out what you are looking for
- Not always apparent where to buy
- Terminology is confusing
- No online customer service
- Contact is hidden
- Requires a credit card sign up
- Very unclear as to what items are

Customer Service Comparison

Voxel

- Chat box pops up with a ping once the website is open
- Sales chat button in the upper right space of all of the pages
- Large chat button on the main page of the site

Rackspace

- Chat box fly out that remains closed unless pressed
- Button remains on the left side of the page on scroll down
- Sales chat button in the upper right space of all of the pages
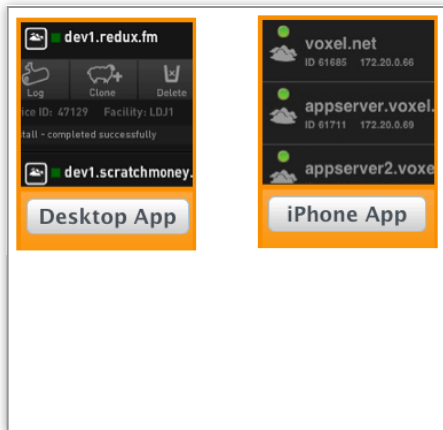- Large chat button on the main page of the site

Softlayer

- Chat box button that remains on the right side of the page on scroll down
- Pop-up that comes up a few seconds after the website opens
- Large chat button on the main page of the site

AWS

- AWS does not offer chat

Online Documentation and Tools

Voxel

- Voxel Desktop application
- Voxel iPhone application
- Blog
- Voxel Cacheability Analyzer
- Informational videos

Rackspace

- Rackspace blog and newsroom
- No online documentation
- No downloadable tools

Softlayer

- Forum
- Articles
- Data sheets
- White papers
- Blog

AWS

- Case studies
- White papers
- Use case solutions
- Videos and webinars
- Articles and tutorials
- Forums

Purchase Experience

Voxel

- Relies primarily on customer service
- Not readily apparent how to purchase unless you sign in
- To sign-up, you need to have your credit card ready removing the ability to build a product before giving your credit card information
- To manage your account, you need to access the portal which is hidden under the "Support" tab and placed under the "Tools and Downloads" tab
- Products are listed under the label "Provisioning" which is not the industry standard naming convention

Rackspace

- Some pages make it more clear than others how to purchase
- The user can select to purchase or learn more, adding a simplicity to the overall design
- No place to sign in unless you are making a purchase
- No apparent way to manage your account on the site

Softlayer

- Allows the user to custom build their product
- Clear pricing chart and downloadable data sheets on all of the products
- You do not have to sign in before building a product

AWS

- Confusing unless you completely understand what the products are
- Step by step walk-through to build your product
- Purchasing process is very straight-forward as long as you know what you are purchasing

Recommendations

- Provide an easily accessible link to the portal

- Make it more obvious how to make a purchase

- Have a user path that is clearer on how to make purchases

- Do not require a credit card sign in before building a product

- Remove the immediate chat box with a ping and replace it with a large call to action button that remains in the same place on the page

- Give deep descriptions of all products in a clear and easy to understand manner

- Rewrite confusing copy

- Keep consistency in layout, color, look and feel

- Keep consistency between page name and header

- Include a bread crumb trail

- Design site with stronger images and pictures with less copy and more infographics

- Include a map of data center locations

- Usability test questions based around what downloadable content a user would want such as white papers and data sheets