Chapter 8

# Defining Salient Features of "Boutique" Instructional Designs and Implications for Design, Development, and Deployment

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## ABSTRACT

*"Boutique" instructional design (ID) projects are fairly common across verticals, especially in higher education, open shared learning, government, and some commercial enterprises. In general, boutique-designed learning is small-scale, with narrowly targeted learners, limited development funding/access to information/ development and deployment technology/human resources, and other aspects. The strategies and tactics for successful boutique projects differ in some ways than those used for mid-scale and full-scale/general ID projects. This work explores some of the dimensions of boutique ID projects and the implications of those dimensions on design, development, and deployment strategies and tactics. This work is informed by decades in the profession, a review of the literature, and analyses of related open-source and closed-source online learning objects.*

## INTRODUCTION

Boutique instructional design projects are of a particular but fairly common kind. To understand the background meanings of this term, it may help to first explore what a "boutique" is without any tie to instructional design.

Boutiques, in the real physical and online, are specialty shops that are organized around particular themes, brands, shopper experiences, services, and select products. Here, the personality of the shopkeeper or the brand (corporate or local) is important. A major selling point is that the shopping experience is one-of-a-kind and unavailable elsewhere. Boutique collections are tailored, selected, and curated, for particular aesthetics or other purposes, by a masterful hand. In general parlance, a "boutique" refers to a specialty store dealing in stylish luxury goods, with elite patronage; boutiques traffic in high cost products, typically clothing ("Boutique," June 13, 2019). A direct one-degree article-article network on Wikipedia, based on the "boutique" article page, the crowd-sourced encyclopedia, shows a variety of evocations at present, with fine art, clothing brands, shop brands, services, and other references (Figure 1).

*Figure 1. "Boutique" article-article network on Wikipedia (1 deg.)*
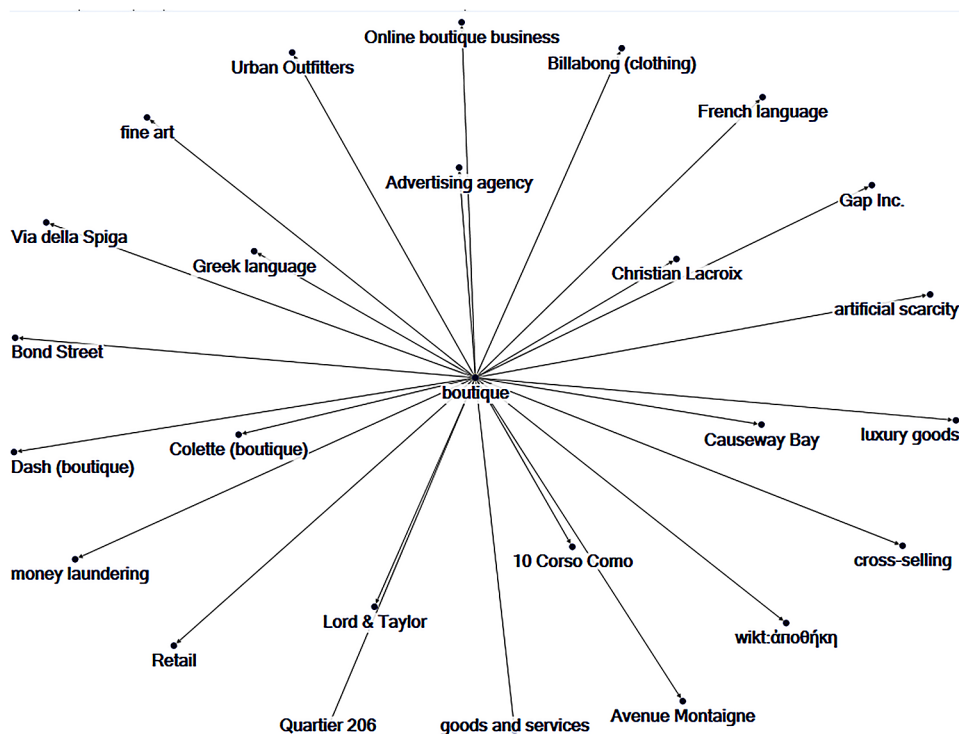
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