Making Social Media Work for Your Business

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Dedication

To Vicki, for your grounded view of life, for an almost undying patience, for an occasional kick up the proverbial and for being so supportive of all of my online endeavours.

Executive summary

THE BUSINESS communication landscape has changed forever. No longer do companies have even a modicum of control over their messages; today, activists and fans alike can, in minutes, create compelling content that can damage or support a company's online and offline reputation.

This report sets out the strategies and tools with which to meet any organisation's online reputation management and stakeholder engagement.

Chapter 1 studies the background to this new communication landscape and points out some of the key features that differentiate it from the communication landscapes that have come before it.

Chapter 2 delves deep into social media strategy and shows how to break down the 'what are we going to do first' conundrums into manageable chunks that align with and reflect corporate goals.

Chapter 3 considers social media policy – the interface between the employee and the outside world as mediated and distributed through the various channels of social media.

Chapter 4 investigates the effects of social media inside an organisation, including how to manage the culture change that social media introduces.

Chapter 5 thinks through the management of social media channels and tools – the 'what will it cost?' and 'who will own it?' questions that are at the forefront of every new technology initiative.

Chapters 6 and 7 inspect the various social media tools available to the organisation and how to gain best advantage of them.

Chapter 8 wraps up the report and concludes that whether an organisation wants to or not, it will have to 'play' (and play in a very real sense) in the social networking, social media driven world if it is to remain relevant to significant groups of stakeholders.

There is also a glossary of social media terms; and prime examples and case studies throughout the report where organisations have benefited by taking advantage of social media tools. Included are examples where companies have failed to take advantage of social media tools and paid dearly.

About the author

LEE HOPKINS is a management psychologist and business communicator with nearly 30 years' experience in helping businesses communicate better, for better business results.

At the leading edge of business communicators in Australia, Lee understands the transformative nature of social media. He spends a considerable amount of time advising businesses, business communities and individual business communicators on the tectonic cultural shifts that new communications technology is facilitating; and how they can best position themselves to take advantage of them.

He is also currently undertaking doctoral research at the University of South Australia's School of Communication, looking at how the new social communication landscape has impacted on senior communicators' roles and responsibilities.

From Adelaide to Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney; from Auckland to Doha, Dubai and San Francisco, Lee is an internationally sought-after speaker on social media. He combines his passion for employee and online business communication with his dynamic presentation skills to create 'once seen, never forgotten' live experiences.

He has over 200 articles on business communication available for reading at LeeHopkins.com; and blogs, podcasts and vidcasts at LeeHopkins.net.

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Acknowledgements

FIRSTLY, I wish to thank fellow Aussie Evie Serventi from the Ark Group in London who approached me out of the blue to write this, my second report for the Ark Group. It came as a most delightful surprise.

Evie gently prodded, poked, encouraged, cajoled and supported me all the way through this endeavour – thank you, Evie.

My thanks extend to her for also making sure the images and layout and more importantly, the words made sense; and especially for helping the light shine through the detritus of words I collected haphazardly on each page.

I wish to thank all those who read my blog and watch my Twitter and Facebook streams, who put up with my absence and occasional acerbic status updates.

Lastly, thanks to the glorious and spring-filled Adelaide hills for inspiration.

Lee Hopkins

It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but those most adaptive to change.

Charles Darwin

Chapter 1: What is social media and why should businesses engage with it?

I WOULD like, if I may, to take you on a strange journey.

Imagine a time where the traditional barons or keepers of 'knowledge' were the only sources of information; at least, information of value at a level above the village day-to-day workings.

The village priest was the authority on the meaning of Holy Scripture and local landowners were the keepers of wealth and dispensers of employment and housing. Information was something that was handed down – from baron to landowner, from landowner to tenant, from father to son and from mother to daughter.

Then one day Gutenberg's printing press exploded the traditional hierarchical nature of information flow. Slowly at first, but increasing in pace every month, the common people were able to access material for themselves, come to their own conclusions and even (gasp) write down their own views for others to read at their leisure and convenience.

Fast forward to late 2010/early 2011 where much has changed. All of the knowledge of the world up until Gutenberg could be encapsulated in one 2010-sized daily edition of *The New York Times*. Science is allegedly doubling its knowledge every two years. The barons or keepers of knowledge are relics of an older age – Murdoch, Turner and their like. Now the common people can use the same tools that mainstream media use and can produce the same quality as the expensive production houses. No longer is knowledge contained by the few and dispensed 'as seen fit'. Knowledge is (almost) free to go wherever it is needed (government-level security issues notwithstanding).

Today the common man can talk to other common men and women about their lives, their passions, their hopes, their dreams, what irks them and what excites them. They can talk with each other about the products and services they use on a daily basis. They can review these products, tear them apart or build them up, all without the intervention of the barons or the companies that produce the products and services.

The common men and women can use (largely) free tools to air their views. They can use simple, hand-held, palm-sized devices to capture events digitally for airing and sharing. As Greg Verdino points out in his book *Micromarketing: Get Big Results by Thinking and Acting Small*, these tools are the signs of a radically changed media landscape, highlighting that technologies play a central role in driving society-level change and that they illustrate significant shifts in consumer behaviours and media preferences.

As I write, Wikipedia[1] (aka the collective common man and woman) defines 'social media' as: "Media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media uses web-based technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogues."

Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define social media as: "A group of Internet-

based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content." Businesses also refer to social media as consumer-generated media (CGM).
A common thread running through all definitions of social media is a *blending of technology and social interaction for the co-creation of value* (emphasis mine).

A couple of years ago the definition centred on the use of tools and technologies that allowed people to connect with each other and share their passions with others around the world. I have no doubt that by the time this report is read the definition will be further refined.

The social media evolution

Given the expansive state of the social web, the figures below will be out of date by the time you read this report, yet they are still a useful guide to the size and scale of social networking and social media adoption. Consider the following:

- Social media has overtaken pornography as the number one activity on the web;
- 96 per cent of Generation Y, which outnumbers baby boomers, have joined a social network;
- Blog search engine Technorati is tracking around 200 million blogs and bloggers publish more than one million new posts daily;
- There are over 145 million Twitter accounts, nearly three new accounts activated every second. The active Twitterati post more than 50 million tweets per day or over 600 tweets per second. Nearly 20 per cent of those tweets contain links to pieces of online content;
- Wikipedia, the online encyclopaedia, has more than 91,000 active writers. These writers contribute to over 15 million articles in 270 different languages. If you were to receive a dollar for each new article, you would earn over AU$179 per hour;
- More than four billion digital still photos have been uploaded to Flickr, Yahoo!'s image storing and sharing service;
- The second-largest search engine in the world is YouTube. It is also the fourth most visited site in the world;
- YouTube has over 70 million videos stored, the average length of which is two minutes and 46 seconds. Every 60 seconds another 24 hours of content is uploaded by its user base, which covers every age demographic. In Australia alone, the average YouTube visitor will watch 90 videos per month; across all video sites, the global audience may watch anything up to 1.2 billion videos per day and average nearly 190 videos (or 12.2 hours) per month per person;
- Facebook is now the world's third largest country behind China and India. It's members share over five billion pieces of content, being video, links to websites, news stories, notes, photos and videos;
- Facebook members can express their individuality, entertain themselves and their friends, declare loyalty for a specific brand, product, music group or celebrity by choosing from among 500,000 different third-party applications;
- 25 per cent of all search results on Google for the world's top 20 brands link to user-generated content (content that the common man and woman has created);
- Nyppex values Twitter at US$1.13bn, LinkedIn at US$1.25bn and Facebook at US$7.6bn; and
- Apple's iPhone has changed how we think about mobile telephony. The Apple iPhone/iPad App Store offers more than 160,000 applications from more than

32,000 independent publishers and has served more than four billion downloads. Other mobile phone manufacturers now offer applications in a similar manner.

These are just *some* of the statistics I could overwhelm you with, but beating people over the head with random big numbers is not my thing.

It's safe to say that social media, the social web, social networking – call it what you will – this new communication landscape has fundamentally changed the relationship between producer and consumer.

It's also safe to say that companies are flocking to these new social spaces in ever-increasing numbers.

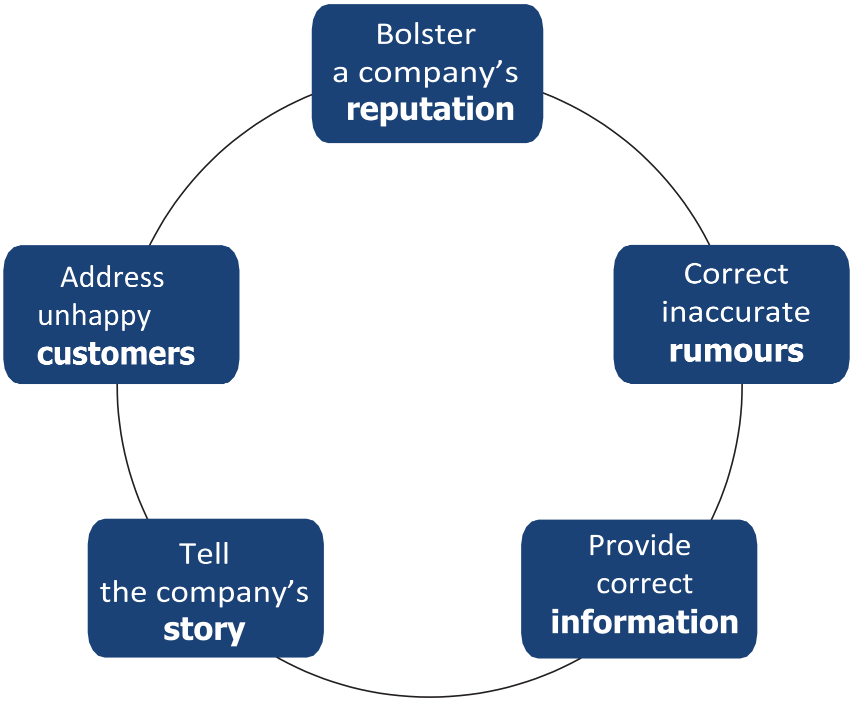
For example, Erik Qualman, the author of *Socialnomics*, recently posted that 700,000 "local businesses" have active Facebook pages and that purpose-built fan pages have created more than 5.3 billion fans.[2]

Which makes *not* becoming involved a dangerous strategic move.

What social media can and cannot do

There are things that social media can and cannot do. What it *can* do is best expressed by the term RRISC:

- Reputation – Social media can help a company bolster its reputation, both online and off;
- Rumours – Social media can correct inaccurate rumours;
- Information – Social media can provide correct information;
- Story – Social media can help tell a company's story in a compelling manner; and
- Customers – Social media can address unhappy customers and help turn them into happy ones.



Bolster a company's **reputation**
Correct inaccurate **rumours**
Provide correct **information**
Tell the company's **story**
Address unhappy **customers**

Figure 1: What social media can do for your business.

Case study: Eurostar and a PR crisis

Compiled by Holly Knowlman of The Vivid Consultancy, website: thevividconsultancy.com.

On Saturday 19 December 2009, five Eurostar trains broke down due to the freezing weather. This event left more than 40,000 passengers stranded on both sides of the Channel and around 2,000 people trapped in the tunnel for several hours. Customers, angry and frustrated at the lack of information about what was happening, turned to social media platforms like Twitter to vent their frustration.

This case study examines the role of social media during and after the event. It also discusses the benefits of integrating social media channels into the overall communications strategy, particularly in the event of a crisis.

A spokesman for Eurostar stated that, although they did have a plan in place for managing issues of this type, they were unprepared for multiple breakdowns on that scale:

"Eurostar admitted it had been aware of the issue for a while, but maintained that whereas in the past it had affected one train at a time, last weekend was unprecedented in having so many trains break down. Lesley Retallack, a Eurostar spokesman, in said there had been similar incidents 'on one or two occasions' but that this time it had occurred on an unprecedented scale and at one of the busiest times of year for the company," wrote *The Independent.*

Aside from concerns about the safety of the passengers trapped in the tunnel, Eurostar were criticised for their failure to communicate properly with those involved:

"You can't treat people like that, [leaving them] without information," said French Ecology Minister Jean-Louis Borloo, speaking to French television crews after the event.

The events have sparked fresh debate about the role of social media as a tool for PR and communications because of its capacity for real-time communication with customers in a crisis situation.

Social media has an important role to play in crisis communications.

Eurostar's social media presence at the time of the crisis was limited to a single campaign. Managed by online conversation agency We Are Social, their 'Little break, Big difference' project focused on the benefits of short breaks to Brussels, Paris and Lille using a website, Facebook page and Twitter account.

To the agency's credit, they explained to the Eurostar team the importance of updating existing crisis plans to incorporate social media:

"We talked to them about the need to put a real-time social media monitoring and responding programme and crisis plan in place, and proposed a conversation audit and consultancy project to help them implement such a programme. However as adapting their existing processes had wider implications across the business, they decided to start small by moving forward with the Little break, Big difference campaign, to learn from the experience of engaging in conversations in social media," said We Are Social's Robin Grant (to read the full article visit: http://bit.ly/ao7e7t).

Eurostar's decision to 'start small' is typical of many companies looking to test the waters of social media. They believed that by beginning their social media integration with an isolated campaign, they would be able to observe the benefits of online engagement without risking the brand's overall reputation.

Planning for a crisis should involve integration across all departments. If Eurostar had integrated social media with its other channels of communication and planned for its use in a crisis, it could have been instrumental in aiding passengers. For example, their Twitter account could have been used to provide up-to-date information and communicate with stranded passengers.

We Are Social stepped outside their brief as the crisis unfolded, and began using the @ little_break Twitter account soon after to communicate directly with passengers. However, their response was reactive instead of being part of a carefully considered, proactive plan that gave them immediate access to the information they needed.

Conversations about your brand will occur online whether you're there or not. The passengers themselves turned to social media to describe their negative experiences. This began almost immediately and continued after the crisis was resolved as they reflected on what had occurred:

"There was no information for passengers stranded in London that night: no hotel information, no hotel vouchers, no coaches laid on. When you phoned up the British Eurostar customer care number there was only an answerphone message about booking tickets over the Christmas period. The impression I had was that Eurostar were trying to deal with this at a minimum of expense," said a passenger in a blog post who was involved in the incident (http://bit.ly/d0XGrg).

Colette Ballou (twitter.com/coletteballou) was one of the passengers stuck in the Channel Tunnel. As the founder of Ballou PR, the agency responsible for Facebook's PR in France, she was perfectly positioned to watch events unfold from a communications perspective. She turned to Twitter to share her experiences with her followers:

"I am watching a case study in horrible communications (otherwise known as PR disaster) unfold from the front lines." (4.30am 19 Dec 2009)

"Shocked at how unprepared and uncommunicative Eurostar was. Eurostar failed to communicate with passengers and social media told the truth and got it to mainstream media fast." (3.15pm 19 Dec 2009)

Failure to protect your online reputation can have far-reaching consequences. Colette's comments were also featured in the national press as they reported on the incident, illustrating how comments made online have the potential to reach far beyond the web. Another potentially damaging issue is that there were two unofficial Twitter addresses, @eurostar and @eurostar_uk. Both are unrelated to the company, which left customers searching for relevant information frustrated.

The need to protect your brand on sites like Twitter is reminiscent of the rush to secure branded domain names for company websites. It is vital to move to protect your online reputation from the outset to ensure that your organisation is not incorrectly associated with rogue accounts.

The lessons from Eurostar's experiences are clear: social media needs to be integrated into the overall communications plan from the outset. Do everything you can to ensure you protect your name online and don't limit your social media use to proactive marketing campaigns. Instead, use it to communicate directly with customers to solve their problems before they use the medium to vent their negative experiences and frustrations.

Holly Knowlman is an account executive at The Vivid Consultancy. For more information on The Vivid Consultancy, please visit: thevividconsultancy.com

What social media cannot do is solve an organisation's communication issues, reduce the workload of its communication teams or be a 'magic bullet' to solve its reputational issues. But if the organisation has had the sense to set up a social media response team, that team will have a tremendous impact on the reputational fortunes of the organisation should a crisis hit.

Employees and social media

The bulk of an organisation's employees are probably already on Facebook and it may well be that a significant number of them are content producers via other mediums (blogs, Twitter, podcasts and/or video). It therefore makes sense that the organisation has some sort of policy or guidelines in place to give employees guidance on how to approach situations when their employer – or their clients, competitors or industry – is brought into the conversation.

The organisation that hides its head in the sand and pretends that it is not discussed in online conversations, or that trusts its employees not to do wrong or make mistakes, is making a foolish mistake itself.

There are no shortages of resources on the internet that can help an organisation stitch together its own social media policy; my own collection of policy links is one starting point: http://bit.ly/9FhSuc.

Chapter 2 of this report goes into more detail about social media policies, why an organisation needs them and how to fashion one that 'fits' the organisation and its culture.

Competitive (dis)advantage – Why you need to be involved

As pointed out previously, with over half a billion people on Facebook the chances are good that the vast majority of your employees are too.

There's also a good chance that many of them read blogs; read an article or two on Wikipedia or watch YouTube or DailyMotion videos; some may have even dipped their toes into the Twittersphere's conversational pool.

Some of your employees may even be part of the ten per cent of the online population that contributes as well as consumes social media content (also known as 'prosumers'). They may write their own blog, or write comments on others; they may listen to or even create their own podcast. They may even create their own videos and upload them to YouTube or Facebook[3] – all behaviour which creates *something* that others can consume and comment upon.

If networked communicators Bob and Carol in accounts; and Ted and Alice in warehousing are talking with each other about their shared passions, the chances are that at some stage they are going to talk about their employer and certainly about the goods and services that they use on a daily basis or aspire to use.

The conversations are happening without the organisation necessarily being aware that they are, or where those conversations are taking place; it is just *assumed* that employees talk about their employers and consumers talk about producers.

The conversations are also not just happening around the proverbial water cooler, either. They are probably more likely to be happening on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube or one someone's blog or inside of a podcast, or over a Skype call which is recorded and then stored for later repeated playback.

If the world is out there talking about your organisation, especially during a time of crisis, doesn't it make sense to be out there taking part in those conversations, too? After all, if the conversations taking place contain incorrect information, who better to give the company's perspective than the company itself?

The company is probably one of the last voices that cynical web citizens would listen to. They would much rather listen to the voices of their peers, even if those peers are wrong. But if the company is not out there joining in the conversations, then it is reducing its chances of having its point of view aired by anybody else because very few people will deliberately go across to the company's website to get the official line, believing (as the cynical will do) that the company's line is full of 'spin', lies and half-truths anyway. The only way to have evangelists come to your aid is to give them some ammunition to use on your behalf.

If the company isn't taking part in the conversations about its products and services, the chances are that its competitors are already, or are planning to stake their place in the 'conversation pool'.

Google the names of your organisation's nearest competitors. I would estimate that with few exceptions (some industries are slower to adopt social media technologies than others, especially heavy industry) some if not most of those competitors are already engaging in the social media sphere, if not to recruit new staff, to directly influence the conversations taking place about their products and services or to keep in touch with and garner the intelligence of former employees.

Any organisation that fails to join in the conversation happening 24/7 is putting itself at a serious competitive disadvantage.

But where does an organisation start if it wants to join in the conversation but doesn't know how?

My advice is to begin with the end in mind: start with defining a social media strategy in order to define your goals, ROI and the best tools to meet your needs.

Luckily for you, that's the focus of the next chapter – just turn the page.

References

1. Social media definition, Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia; can be found at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_media.
2. 'Social Media Revolution' video, Qualman, E., posted on YouTube; can be found at: http://bit.ly/aIo1bE.
3. In fact, there are more videos uploaded daily to Facebook than there are to YouTube. However, YouTube videos are viewable by the world at large in most cases, whereas the vast majority of videos uploaded to Facebook are private one-to-one webcam videos.

Chapter 2: Developing a social media strategy

"MY TAX dollars are being used to bailout companies that made bad business decisions? Screw them, let them go bankrupt."

"Do we really want to bail out GM, which mocked global warming and stubbornly cranked out SUVs? Darwinism should prevail: adapt or die."

"I'm sick and tired of these CEOs getting millions of dollars to ruin companies. It's greed pure and simple."

The above quotes were taken during the heydays of the recent global financial crisis, from which we are all struggling to recover. Frustrated individuals realised that they could vent their feelings and have an impact on people's opinions via social media.

But responding directly to them, without thought of the longer term implications of what is being said and why, could lead to further reputation damage for the organisation.

Five Ws and a H

It is imperative that strategic thinking be applied to any organisation's social media initiatives. This chapter will outline a strategic approach that ties any social media initiative to the organisation's business goals. I call it the 'Five Ws and a H' approach.

The first W – Who

Before you can consider which tool to use, you need to consider the 'who' questions:

- Who are you aiming to converse with?
- Who will be responsible for managing this initiative?
- Who will speak on behalf of the organisation? (You may, for example, want to consider letting key suppliers or customers also engage with your conversational audience)? and
- Will all employees have the ability to outreach, or just specific subsets (for example, customer service staff, marketing, sales, public relations)?

The second W – What

You may want to consider the answers to the following questions:

- What outcomes are you looking for?
- What expectations do you have (including hidden expectations, which may not be uncovered easily – think about what you personally stand to gain from the success or otherwise of this social media initiative)?
- What are the risks involved with this project?
- What are the rewards?
- What are the obstacles to success?
- What can you do to mitigate them? and
- What resources are you going to need?

The third W – When

Think through the answers to the following questions:

- When are you planning to launch your initiative? and
- When will you know you have been successful?

The fourth W – Where

Take time to understand the implications of your answers to the following questions:

- Where will you launch this initiative (on what social platform)?
- Where will you launch the next initiative (perhaps the next phase of this current initiative)?
- Where will you launch the third initiative? and
- Where are you going to get the resources to manage the conversations that ensue?

The fifth W – Why

Tie back the answers to these questions to your organisation's overall business strategy:

- Why are you considering using social media? and
- Why even build a social media strategy – Why not just 'dive in'?

The H question – How

Only after you have answered the five W questions should you then look at the 'how' question: how to connect – Have you thought about which tools to use? (For example, there is Twitter, Yammer, Facebook, LinkedIn, Foursquare, Gowalla, blogs, podcasts, vidcasts, wikis; plus there are issues around the technology accessing the platform – more and more traffic is coming from smartphones and the trend is only rising.

The five pillars approach

There is another way of looking at social media strategy: the five pillars approach. While asking the organisation similar questions to those above, the approach asks practitioners the following theme-based questions:

- Policy – Social media policy: your employees are using social media; your company is probably being talked about via social media; what happens when the two collide?
- Process – Who is responsible for moderating the conversations? What systems need to be put in place for these conversations to happen? What will happen if someone says something negative?
- People – Who are the foundation team members responsible for getting your first initiative up and running? Who will be responsible for ensuring the systems stay available 24/7? Will the people involved be from inside and/or outside of the organisation's firewall and front door? Are executives willing to be actively involved?
- Performance – Aka 'measurement': What measurement yardsticks/KPIs will you put in place so that you know when you are successful? What will you do to celebrate success? What will you do if KPIs are not being met? Will you celebrate milestones along the way to the annual KPI assessment? and
- Price – What price are you willing to pay for social media success? Are you aware of the risks? The rewards?

Measurement – The ROI question

There is more discussion on this in Chapter 5, but briefly there are a large number of possible metrics you can choose from in order to establish a baseline and then progress towards 'success', however you describe it.

Why even have a strategy?

There is a contrarian view held by many social media theorists and senior practitioners (such as Euan Semple, ex BBC) that going through a 'strategy-setting' process is a complete waste of time.

Their argument, not without merit, is that the tools are so cheap to install and so quick to learn to use that the organisation can very quickly see if they will ‘work’ or not within the organisation’s culture. Yes, there is still a place for the evangelist to proselytise social media’s potential, but a culture of ‘fail fast’ should be considered when using these rapid-to-deploy tools.

The ‘fail fast’ culture insists that it only takes a short while to see if something is working or not. If it’s not, jettison it and try something else.

Additionally, the contrarian view also holds that because of the ubiquitous nature of the conversational tools of social media, there is no agency or function within an organisation that cannot in some way benefit from or contribute to the global conversation. So rather than contact with the outside world being limited to a few tightly-managed and KPI’d individuals, the organisation should instead let those who wish to converse do so, no matter within what function or department they currently sit. Let them speak, it is argued, in a recognisable human voice (as distinct from the cold, distancing language of the corporation) to those who understand their language – the language of accounts receivable, perhaps, or of administrative services or records management.

The benefits of a customised social media strategy

There are benefits to creating a social media strategy that is customised to your company, rather than just picking one up off the shelf (shockingly, I know of some digital consultancies that pretend to offer each client an individualised one, but in fact use the same template for all).

Customising a strategy for your organisation’s needs (and reviewing it at least annually) can offer the following benefits.

Productivity increase

By implementing social technologies ‘behind the firewall’ you can speed up time to market and knowledge acquisition blockages. For example, replacing the endless circles of e-mail and document management and change with a simple wiki can deliver tangible results.

Law firm Allen & Overy decided to embrace social media as it is well suited to environments such as law (constantly changing and requiring a large amount of information sharing). It started off with three pilot sites, each having a combined blog and wiki. The results were astonishing and Allen & Overy now has nearly 30 sites for practice areas, new legislations etc. These sites make it easier for lawyers to answer questions and collaborate on cases. Social media is also used for training events and for people to discuss the issues raised in such events.[1]

Lowered operational costs

If the endless paper chase of revised documents being sent to members of a project team can be instantly cut by implementing a wiki, a no-cost tool that takes an hour or two at most to install and set up, then the cost of each project is surely reduced.

But there are other costs that are lowered, too. Erik Qualman on his socialnomics.com blog reports that wine aficionado and maverick wine seller Gary Vaynerchuk found first hand that US$15,000 in direct mail brings in 200 new customers, US$7,500 spent on billboards brings in 300 new customers, but US$0 spent on Twitter has brought in 1,800 new customers. Vaynerchuk has grown his family business from US$4m to US$50m using social media.

Additionally, Lenovo was able to achieve cost savings through a 20 per cent reduction in call centre activity as customers increasingly go to its community website for answers.

Increased worker flexibility

Knowledge workers are able to work remotely, saving the organisation seating costs. For example, Twitter customer service teams can work from home yet still offer full support, utilising private Twitter conversations, wikis/intranets and e-mail to solve customers' problems.

Journalists and employee communication professionals can file their photo- or video-included stories from the field, rather than having to return to the office.

Podcasts and vidcasts can keep remote area sales staff on the road for longer, with fewer stops back at HQ in order to update their knowledge and view their sales statistics.

Knowledge sharing

Blogs and wikis are tremendous tools to capture the knowledge of baby boomers who are retiring from the organisation; especially so if they are encouraged to remain an 'alumni' member of the organisation via one social media channel or another.

But equally, they can serve as knowledge tools for existing or 'new hire' employees. New hires can quickly become familiar with the company's culture by listening to podcasts about the company's 'story' on the way to and from work, or watch videos about cultural or process issues on their ipad or other video-enabled device.

Enhanced relationship marketing

By incorporating social media tools into your overall communication strategy, you have the opportunity to build up trust within the organisation and with clients, customers and other outside stakeholder groups. People will feel they are communicating with other people, not with a faceless corporation; be less likely to be virulent in their approach and more likely to be open to engaging in honest conversation.

All of the above benefits are dependent upon the organisation introducing social media into its communication strategy. The tools themselves are able to bring little benefit if they are not applied in a strategic manner.

But because each organisation is individual unto itself, with its own exigencies and requirements, its own politics and culture, it is impossible in this report to provide any more guidance than this: ask yourself and your organisation the questions found at the beginning of this chapter.

Once you have those answers you are on the way to creating a sensible strategy for your own organisation; just don't forget to review it annually (sooner if appropriate) and make sure to take measurements at the start of your planning process so that you have benchmarks against which to measure your progress.

Case study: B2B – Shipserv

ShipServ is a leading e-marketplace in the maritime industry providing a portfolio of software, services and hosted applications designed to enable efficient global shipping. Their core product is TradeNet, an e-commerce platform connecting industry buyers and suppliers. Currently ShipServ serves 150 shipping companies managing 5,000 ships and approximately 30,000 suppliers. In 2008 the company turned to the social web to help them through several marketing challenges including:

- The image of being an impersonal software company;
- Limited marketing budget and employee resources;

- To increase awareness of using e-commerce as a shipping solution – a big change for traditional customers; and
- Customer base not early technology adopters. A survey showed 65 per cent regarded the social web as a ‘distracting waste of time’.

The main objectives of the marketing programme are:

- To drive 50 per cent more traffic to website in three months;
- Raise awareness of brand throughout global shipping industry;
- Attract new sales leads through relevant content; and
- Change focus from ‘shouting’ at customers to ‘listening, engaging and inspiring’.

Strategy

The company began with research to find out where customers were receiving their information, their participation in the social web, information needs and the current ‘state of the conversation’ for the ShipServ brand. Key discoveries included that there were very few online communities for their industry and that the mention of their brand was rare. Despite the fact that their historical customer base largely did not use the social web, they saw an opportunity to seize the lead and become a thought leader in their marketplace.

ShipServ partnered with an outside marketing firm and their CRM vendor to create an integrated social media plan that focused on leading the creation of an online community, developing outstanding content and using social media channels to drive new sales leads through their website.

ShipServ undertook the following actions to achieve the company’s strategy and key objectives:

- Conducted research – To determine customer information needs and keyword themes;
- Revamped website – To be more customer and content driven. New design was more easy-going and personal. Developed custom landing pages for groups of keywords used to find the company and specific calls to action based on individual customer needs;
- Created a blog – That frequently featured their customers. They also used the blog as a way to establish conversations in the industry;
- Established ‘scorecard’ – Through their CRM system to track lead nurturing progress. All reactions and visitor behavior was examined for possible sales leads;
- Developed quarterly content plan based on themes established from research – Content was leveraged and re-purposed in various ways across all the social media sites;
- Promoted original content – Through variety of social media channels, which were used as ‘beacons’ to drive traffic back to the main website. These channels included: blog, e-newsletter, Twitter, light-hearted videos, podcasts, Facebook and LinkedIn;
- A series of valuable white papers (like ‘10 Essentials of Online Marketing in the Shipping Industry’) – Created and promoted through the social channels, website and newsletter, resulting in 1,000 downloads in seven months;
- Established online industry community – By creating a group on LinkedIn. The company introduced this forum to both shipping company suppliers and procurement professionals and had 863 members as of last week. Content for the community was developed based

on the initial research of user needs and included research, surveys, and of course content re-purposed from other sources; and

- Search engine optimisation – Campaign, including keyword content planning.

Results

Website

- Website visitors increased by 59 per cent;
- Page views increased by 70 per cent;
- Average time on site increased by 25 per cent; and
- Generated over 1,000 downloads of a white paper

Community

- 378 members in the ShipServ Maritime Network group on LinkedIn;
- 300 visitors to the blog;
- Over 600 views of the company videos; and
- LinkedIn and Twitter have gone from zero to the top 20 traffic sources.

Business statistics

- Increased contact-to-lead (landing page contact) conversion by 150 per cent;
- Increased lead-to-opportunity conversion by 50 per cent;
- Decreased campaign management costs by 80 per cent;
- Increased the number of sales-ready leads by 400 per cent; and
- Measurable increase in brand awareness.

Break-even on the $30,000 social marketing media investment was achieved in three months. The company estimated the results they achieved would have cost $150,000 through traditional media.

Source: BusinessGrow.com http://bit.ly/apoLo8, reproduced with permission.

Case study: Deloitte Australia

Clearly social media is about socialising in communities online – sometimes leading, sometimes connecting and sometimes following.

It isn’t a monologue, one group or business, talking to a passive audience. Rather, social media is a collective. Many people talking to many; and being able to do so, when they want, where they want and how they want.

Connecting through e-mails, blogs, wikis, web, video and photo sites, social media isn’t necessarily about going to a particular place. It’s more about coming together. Networking and connecting in a new, more equal and progressive way.

To be 'best able to connect' means to move away from a destination mindset and toward a distribution mindset. To be where people are and to participate in a way that speaks to them directly.

To do that means to be in people's personal environments – Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Twitter etc. The price of entry is relevance.

Nevertheless, it is a challenge for a corporate to get comfortable with the potential anarchy of social media. To be able to balance permission to speak out and reach out to each other and to clients in a rich online channel, with all the associated risks, isn't easy.

In retrospect Deloitte Australia defaulted to one of its seven key values and went with 'empower and trust'. The counsel given to employees is to understand the difference between the personal and the professional, to be open, honest and respectful and as professionals, to be responsible for their own and the organisation's reputation. Deloitte Australia's social media steering committee is developing online education and a support program to be a one stop shop for all employees.

Like many 'new ideas', social media had its own tipping point. It occurred in Deloitte Australia when the Deloitte Digital CEO Peter Williams – a maverick accountant with a presentation style akin to Gordon Ramsey and consistently voted one of the most inspiring partners in the firm – put out a voice mail to sign up to Yammer and come up with videos and tag lines for a new advertising campaign, known within Deloitte Australia as the 'Green Dot' campaign.

Pete's voicemail and the subsequent input from the CEO and the chief marketing officer triggered 1,000+ new members of Deloitte Australia to join Yammer, form 38 groups and create 1,184 original concepts including videos.

This resulted in 3,000 hits a week on the videos, some 3,300 headlines posted on Yammer and the delight of interactivity (over half of the firm's staff) some 2,500 creative directors voted for the taglines.

The strategist behind the award winning Green Dot advertising campaign, chief marketing officer David Redhill, recently responded to a Yammer question for a client as to Deloitte's ticket to play in social media generally:

"Three reasons? How about five: 1) We have developed new products using social media platforms which now drive revenue. 2) We have made tangible improvements to our business from harnessing the collective wisdom of our people. 3) We have engaged 4,500 people in the process of building a marketing strategy. 4) We now have the largest internal Yammer network in the world. 5) We have used social media to blitz the competition and grab share of mind in the media and government, through the innovative way we used Twitter for the last Federal Budget."

David goes on to add, "A client could learn from all these successes. We also have one of the most forward looking leadership teams in terms of legitimising social media in the workplace, have a national social media council and a rapidly developing knowledge of our social media policy in the field."

So for Deloitte Australia the choice is not, 'do we participate? The question is how?'

To participate in social media you must unleash energy, not try to control it. The process, technology and policy are easy. Getting the right attitude is hard. Deloitte Australia is developing a framework around how to manage social media risk, defining what is and isn't acceptable behaviour; monitoring use and, where inappropriate, dealing with it. "In fact knowing how to respond to an incident and having a team ready to respond, will be a key," explained Tommy Viljoen risk services partner and member of the Deloitte social media steering committee.

This committee is a unique group comprising a risk services partner, the general counsel, the chief marketing officer, the CEO of Deloitte Digital, the chief IT officer, as well as subject matter experts from across the firm, including a doctoral candidate in social media, a digital marketing manager, and managers and analysts from innovation and the online team. The committee has developed guidelines that put the focus on education.

As general counsel Leslie Moore says, "The central idea is for people to understand how social media works. Our focus is not on policing social media when it goes wrong. The committee wants to work with people so we can all benefit from the upside of social media."

'Social media at Deloitte: participation, communication, transformation'; can be found at: http://bit.ly/cbOp01, reproduced with permission.

Reference

1. Thomas, K., 'Case study: Web 2.0 at law firm Allen & Overy, 8 February 2007; can be found at: http://bit.ly/bfwTxs and http://bit.ly/9vVaGz.

Chapter 3: Developing a social media policy

CONVERSATIONS HAPPEN everywhere, not just in cyberspace. Friends talk with friends, family talk with family, neighbours talk with neighbours and employees talk with customers. But when those conversations take place online, where Google is there to capture every word, or video capture and voice capture software can record conversations without one party realising, things can start to become more risky for an organisation.

This chapter aims to reduce the risk of online conversations by showing you how to navigate the minefield of employee-to-outside world and employee-to-employee online conversations. It will look at social media ethics, social media policies and where to find examples of those policies that you can tailor to suit your own organisational requirements.

Social media ethics – Three Ts and an A

Good social media practice is based on entering into and maintaining mutually beneficial conversations.

One way to consider this is to mentally picture four foundational pillars that support your social media practice, the pillars being:

- Truth;
- Trust;
- Transparency; and
- Accountability.

Truth

If you consistently speak the truth in your conversations (be those conversations by yourself or by your employees), then over time you will gain the trust of your conversational partners.

Of course, truth is a flexible beast and there are limits about how much of the truth can be released at any given moment. But the inhabitants of the social media world are more likely to believe in your integrity and thus believe in your words when you open yourself up and say what is on your mind.

Naturally, you can stop short of the whole truth if that truth includes ‘commercial in confidence’ material, or material sensitive to a third party, but the inhabitants of the social media world are no longer satisfied with companies who hide behind endless ‘we cannot tell you’ statements and make their dissatisfaction known, sometimes to a very wide audience.

The secret to good social media relations is to engage with others as you would had you met them at a barbecue at a friend’s place. Meet them with patience, tolerance and honesty as much as you can and you will be rewarded accordingly. If they point out an area where your company could make improvements, acknowledge that and gracefully take it on the chin; that improvement could be the one that cascades and leapfrogs your organisation to a new level.

If you have the organisational power to enact that improvement, do it and let the person or people who suggested it know that you have and what the outcome has been/is expected. If you don’t have the organisational power to enact the suggested improvement, make sure that the idea is forwarded to someone who does and let those who made the suggestion know that you have forwarded the idea on. Ideally, you would let them know to whom you forwarded the suggestion, but that may be a step too far for the organisation in its early days of social media engagement.

Either way, if you can show that you have acted consistently over time to deliver the truth, as openly as you can while mindful of commercial confidences, you will build up reputational trust in your audience. Break that trust and your digital reputation takes a beating; and the bigger the break, the bigger the beating.

Trust

Despite mainstream press commentary to the opposite, the inhabitants of the social media world (that is, most of your organisation and most of the world outside of your organisation's front door) don't set out to be deliberately difficult and nasty.

People have a tendency to react to something (an event, a person, an organisation) in the same way that they are reacted to. Like meets like.

Therefore it makes sense to build a sense of trust into your conversations, a trust that everyone in the conversation will treat everyone else with respect.

As an organisation among cynical citizens, you must be first to trust in the intentions and goodwill of others even if you fear otherwise. At times and in controversial situations there will no doubt be some anger and angst expressed against the organisation, or against those who engage with the public or their employees via online channels, but the organisation should still engage from a position that trusts that the goodwill will return, that common-sense will prevail and that only ten per cent of the readership will comment (but the remaining 90 per cent will be watching very closely to see how you react), looking for signs that you are behaving like a good corporate citizen. Trust in their ability to influence their peers in ways that you cannot control, nor sometimes even witness.

Transparency

As much as there are limits on how much 'truth' you can deliver at any one time, so too, there are sound reasons why an organisation might want to limit the amount of information it shares with its various stakeholders. Issues of legal disclosure, third party commercial sensitivity, strategic direction *inter alia* means there are sometimes conversations that have to be cut short at the 'sorry, but we cannot talk about this at the moment' stage.

However, online conversations in this new social media landscape should always be conducted with as much transparency as possible. Thus, employees who are engaging in conversations within the social media space should be named. For example, a Twitter account with the name XYZCorp, should somewhere in the 'Bio' section, have the real name of the employee managing that Twitter account. Or if there is a customer service team blog, the names of the bloggers should be given.

Similarly, if your organisation is one that represents others you should always publicly acknowledge that relationship. Thus, in your tweets, for example, when talking about something one of your clients has done, or you are asking them a question, preface or end your tweet with '[client]': "@rhsa_CEO [client]: What is the state of the housing market this month?"

Or if you are blogging or talking about a client or supplier in a video or podcast,

How Optus Australia customer service manages its Twitter account

Optus Australia have a very transparent process when it comes to managing their various Twitter accounts, including their product/service related account, @Optus.

At the beginning of each shift, employees managing the account announce who they are and then in each tweet they also say their name. For example:

“@MoneyInSilk Social Internet is free on most new plans therefore we split it to make it easier to track charged data usage :) Holly”

“@MoneyInSilk If you have any questions or concerns about ur bill u can always drop us a tweet & we can organise to give you a call – Holly”

“@scrummitch If you’re interested in a career just click on this link → http://bit.ly/2G0qDb - Greg :)

This level of transparency has been adopted by many customer service organisations in Australia who use Twitter to engage in conversation with their customers.

make sure you let your audience clearly know that you have a relationship with that named organisation or person.

Should you decide to hide these relationships, sooner or later they will become common knowledge (the internet, and social media in particular, is particularly good at finding out the stuff that some prefer remains hidden) and you or your organisation’s digital reputation could take a beating as a result. It is better to be open and honest about these relationships from the outset, that way no one can accuse you of hiding something.

Accountability

Google has a long memory. Words and actions that you take today may come back to haunt you in six months' or six years’ time.

Therefore, as discussed previously, it makes sense to be truthful, trusting and transparent whenever you engage in online conversation. But equally you hold yourself and your employees accountable for what you say, even if what you say changes over time.

The time has long gone when politicians and others could say ‘you quoted me out of context’. With the ubiquitous presence of digital capture technology comes the ability to find the entire context for oneself, so that the previous excuses no longer wash.

However, that doesn’t mean that an organisation, or indeed a person, cannot change its mind over time. Naturally, as new events and information comes to light, as circumstances change and unfold, even deeply-held beliefs can be modified or turned 180 degrees. Organisations are no different from human beings in that regard.

Social media conversations should always be conducted in a human voice not a corporate one, between human beings who allow themselves and each other to change their minds. Therefore, as long as an organisation doesn’t back away from a previously stated position but instead acknowledges it AND THEN goes on to explain why the position has changed, including links to the information that shaped that change of position, the organisation has nothing to fear.

That is not to say that the organisation will never be criticised. Of course it will.

There will always be malcontents and the disappointed online – just as there are malcontents and the disappointed offline, but their numbers and influence will be small.

As an example of accountability in practice, consider an employee who blogs on the company's behalf and has responded to a comment on a post, saying that they will look into the matter raised and get back to the commentator.

That employee is now accountable to do just that and should they fail to do so they should be questioned as to why they failed in their duty. Similarly, if the organisation (through one of its employees) says that it will pass on a particular piece of information to a relevant department (or, preferably, person), the organisation is accountable to do so. Should it later become known that the organisation failed to do what it said it would, its digital trust reputation will take a hit.

Three Ts and an A – The outcome

But as long as the organisation and its employees who social mediarise on its behalf are truthful in their conversations, trusting of the goodwill and good intentions of those other conversationalists, are transparent in the relationships they have with third parties and are accountable for what they say and promise, the ethical organisation should have no fear of engaging in the social media landscape.

Building an ethical culture

Social media is a culture change agent within an organisation as it demands that truth, trust, transparency and accountability be a fundamental part of organisational communication and relationships. In some organisations this is not how 'things are around here'.

Organisations that have a rigid 'management knows best' culture, or a culture where innovation and risk-taking are welcomed only on the 'values statement' but not in real life will find it harder than others to embrace social media. Those organisations who do not trust their employees to do the right thing will similarly find letting go of the corporate message hard to do.

Even companies that are more fluid in their management styles and more open to innovative ways of doing things will find resistance to the changes that social media brings to hierarchical structures.

As Levine, Locke, Searls and Weinberger noted in their seminal work, *The Cluetrain Manifesto: The End of Business As Usual*[1] hyperlinks subvert hierarchy. There will always be pockets of (usually middle-) management that feel threatened by letting employees at the 'sharp end' engage directly with those outside of the company gates, even if those employees are trained to do so (think sales or customer service staff). Imagine how they might feel if employees in roles not normally customer-focused (accounts receivable, perhaps, or central administration, or in-house project teams) are empowered to engage with a wider sphere of influencers.

Luckily for the organisation – and those managers – there are ways to reduce the risk of employees saying something out of sync with the organisation's objectives and one of the key ways is to build a culture within the company that revolves around the three Ts and an A principle. Another is to use Telstra's 3Rs policy (see Telstra case study).

A training package could, for example, be created that takes all employees who are being given the right to engage

Telstra's 3Rs

Telstra, the Australian telco giant, has an organisation-wide policy for how it engages with its audiences. The 3Rs policy[2] has been enthusiastically commented upon across the globe.

The three Rs stand for representation, responsibility and respect:

"Telstra's 3 Rs of social media engagement are … 'guardrails' designed to protect the interests of employees and the company. In brief, the 3 Rs ask that when engaging in social media you be clear about who you are *representing* [Telstra], you take responsibility for ensuring that any references to Telstra are factually correct and accurate and do not breach confidentiality requirements, and that you show respect for the individuals and communities with which you interact." (from http://bit.ly/9bqx6O (pdf)).

Telstra's very clever in-house training package has been made available for viewing at http://bit.ly/7pqXD1.

through social media channels through a step-by-step outlining of their responsibilities. This could be for current employees and also given as part of any new-hire induction programme.

Equally, the entire workforce could be put through a three Tsand an A or 3Rs awareness programme, with rights to engage via social media channels only given to employees who had successfully passed a knowledge test which reinforced the desired behaviours and ethical positions.

Certainly, at the very least, all employees in an organisation should be given a copy of the organisation's social media policy.

Why it is key to have a social media policy

In the past, employees could spout off about their employer or their manager over drinks at the local pub or at a friend's barbecue. Today they can talk about your company online and that conversation can be heard around the globe.

So it makes sense to let all employees know that they have a responsibility to the organisation to ensure that what they say about the company reflects a fair and balanced viewpoint. Some organisations, in their social media policies, allow employees to say what they think as long as they preface their postings with disclaimers that their views are not those of their employers. This is a wise strategy.

Many companies now have a social media policy in place. A lot of these policies are logical extensions of already existing policies around employee behaviour both outside work and during work, as well as extensions of e-mailing policies and protocols.

Some social media policies are long and cover a lot of topics; some are short and let the employee decide for themselves what is right or wrong.

What all social media policies do, however, is give insight into the culture inside the organisation – a long, complex, tightly-managed social media policy may well be reflective of a tightly-managed company that is highly concerned about safeguards and its own security, for example. Not that such concerns should be belittled, but obsessive focus on them can lead to a lack of risk-taking within the organisation and a rapid decline in the company's competitive advantage. A variety of examples of social media policies are provided in the next few pages.

Social Media at Ford Motor Company

Scott Monty and his team at Ford Motor Company have created a useful set of digital participation guidelines for all Ford employees who may engage in social networking or social media at any time (whether at work or at home). Among the good advice found in the guidelines are nuggets such as:

"Use your common sense – it's good business practice for companies (and individuals) to keep certain topics confidential. Respect confidentiality. Refrain from speculation on the future of the Company and its products. Keep topics focused to matters of public record when speaking about the Company or the automotive industry. Do not disclose non-public Company information or the personal information of others."

Similarly, when it comes to 'what should I do if?' questions that employees might have, Scott and his team suggest, "If you have any questions about what is appropriate, play it smart and check with a member of the Communications team or the Legal office before posting."

Source: http://scr.bi/9y6gdH

IBM social computing guidelines

IBM's guidelines were created by company employees in a global discussion and internal vote, using a forum-like tool they developed for themselves. The outcome of the discussion shows the depth and creativity of the thinking across the organisation.

Many social media consultants and pundits consider these guidelines to be the 'gold standard' of social media policy:

- Know and follow IBM's Business Conduct Guidelines;
- IBMers are personally responsible for the content they publish on-line, whether in a blog, social computing site or any other form of user-generated media. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time – protect your privacy and take care to understand a site's terms of service;
- Identify yourself – name and, when relevant, role at IBM – when you discuss IBM or IBM-related matters, such as IBM products or services. You must make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of IBM;
- If you publish content online relevant to IBM in your personal capacity use a disclaimer such as this: "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent IBM's positions, strategies or opinions;"
- Respect copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws;
- Don't provide IBM's or another's confidential or other proprietary information and never discuss IBM business performance or other sensitive matters publicly;
- Don't cite or reference clients, partners or suppliers without their approval. When you do make a reference, link back to the source. Don't publish anything that might allow inferences to be drawn which could embarrass or damage a client;
- Respect your audience. Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in IBM's workplace. You should also show proper

consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory – such as politics and religion;

- Be aware of your association with IBM in online social networks. If you identify yourself as an IBMer, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with colleagues and clients;
- Don't pick fights, be the first to correct your own mistakes;
- Try to add value. Provide worthwhile information and perspective. IBM's brand is best represented by its people and what you publish may reflect on IBM's brand; and
- Don't use IBM logos or trademarks unless approved to do so.

A more detailed discussion of each of these 12 points is available for viewing at: http://bit.ly/3yKymv.

British Telecom's social media guidelines

BT has an extensive set of guidelines and explanations about social media. Here's an excerpt from their documents:

If you decide that you need to take part in on-line collaboration on the internet to support your role in BT, you must ensure that you:

- Have read and understood all the relevant policies relating to this activity; and
- Have sought and gained approval to do so from your line manager.

Contributing to collaborative activity managed on a social media site on the internet can seem daunting, particularly if you are doing so in an *official* capacity as a BT employee. However, by following these simple guidelines you should be able to take an active part in this kind of activity safely.

- BT's business principles – Understand and follow our business principles as described in The Way We Work [a BT document for internal viewing only];
- Compliance – Never disclose commercially sensitive or privacy marked company information in your contributions, or publish information that might contravene BT's undertakings with Ofcom. You should ensure information you publish conforms to our Code of Practice [a BT document];
- Copyright – Ensure you are not infringing copyright rules;
- Identification – When discussing BT or its business, always identify clearly who you are, what your role in BT is and publish in the first person. Use a disclaimer when appropriate (see next bullet);
- Disclaimer – If you are publishing information about BT or your role in BT you should use a disclaimer along the following lines: *"The views expressed on this site are my own and don't reflect the views of my employer;"*
- Personal responsibility – You are personally responsible for content you publish into social media tools – be mindful that what you publish will be public for many years;

- Authenticity – Always be honest and open, but be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people's perceptions of BT as a company. If you make a mistake in a contribution, be the first to come clean and admit it – honesty of this type quickly builds respect among other users;
- Keep calm – Don't pick fights by escalating *heated* discussions but be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations. Never contribute to a discussion if you are *angry* ... leave it, calm down, and return to it at a later date when you can contribute in a calm and rational manner;
- Personal judgement – If you feel even slightly uneasy about something you are about to publish, then the chances are you shouldn't do it. Remember, the information you publish will be visible to other web users for a long time. If in doubt, discuss it with your line manager first;
- Discretion – Don't discuss competitors, customers, partners or suppliers without their prior approval;
- Respect – Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would be unacceptable in a BT workplace. Always consider others' privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory e.g. politics and religion;
- Personal privacy – Avoid publishing your personal contact details where they can be accessed and used widely by people you did not intend to see them. It is better to contact an individual outside the collaborative space if you want to take something *off-line;*
- Etiquette – Before your first contribution on any social media site, it is a good idea to observe the activity on the site for a while before launching in yourself to get a feel for the style of contributions, the nature of the content and any 'unwritten' rules that other contributors might follow; and
- Day job – *A*ctivity on social media tools during office hours should complement and/or support your role in BT.

More of BT's social media guidelines can be found at: http://bit.ly/9k1Bds.

Coca-Cola's social media policy

Coca-Cola's policy is extensive, yet comes with an interesting introduction that reflects the desired outcomes of the policy:

"Every day, people discuss, debate and embrace The Coca-Cola Company and their brands in thousands of online conversations. Coca-Cola recognizes the vital importance of participating in these online conversations and are committed to ensuring that they participate in online social media the right way. These Online Social Media Principles have been developed to help empower the Coca-Cola associates to participate in this new frontier of marketing and communications, represent our Company, and share the optimistic and positive spirits of our brands."

The complete policy (pdf) can be downloaded at: http://bit.ly/62LhLA.

LiveWorld social media content guidelines

LiveWorld have a very short and sweet social media policy.

Be transparent

- If you're writing or commenting about Company business, always identify yourself and LiveWorld by name; and
- If you contribute to or maintain a personal blog or website that covers the Company's business space, make clear that your opinions are your own and not LiveWorld's.

Be respectful

- We encourage you express your opinions, but we ask that you don't resort to personal attacks, harassment, cultural insensitivity, or discrimination in the process.

Be yourself

- We value your personality and individual interests, including those that fall outside of your primary work responsibilities. Let that personality shine in your online content!

Be smart

- Some company projects, lessons learned, and success stories are fine to share; others aren't. Don't reveal company secrets or proprietary information, and make sure you have permission from our clients and partners before mentioning them by name; and
- Your words and statements online are a reflection of LiveWorld. Use your best judgment when deciding whether content is appropriate to publish. If you have any doubts, ask your company executive.

Social media policies online

Naturally, there is an easy way of finding out if a particular company has a social media policy – Google them.

Alternatively, there are a number of social media policies that you can choose from at socialmediagovernance.com, although be aware that sometimes the organisation referenced moves its policies to elsewhere on its site or removes them from public view and so the links on socialmediagovernance.com may not be up to date.

I have a collection of social media policies bookmarked on Delicious – http://bit.ly/9FhSuc – which you are welcome to view.

With so many resources online (as I write this, 'social media policy' has 432,000 results) there is bound to be a policy that you can adapt to suit your own organisation's needs. Remember, you don't need to reinvent the wheel – a successful policy can simply be an extension of already existing employee behaviour and e-mail etiquette policies and standards.

References

1. Locke, C., et al, *The Cluetrain Manifesto: The End of Business As Usual,* Perseus, New York, US, 2000.
2. Social Media – Telstra's 3 Rs of Social Media Engagement, Company Policy, Telstra; can be found at: http://bit.ly/7pqXD1.

Chapter 4: Managing the effects of social media in your organisation

INTRODUCING ANY new technology into an organisation creates a ripple effect; introducing social media into an organisation has the potential to create a tsunami. Therefore, it is important to manage the culture-change impacts that social media brings to both the organisation and its employees.

This chapter will look at how to change a traditional organisational mindset and the impact of changing the way a company communicates.

How to change a traditional organisational mindset

"Change occurs when an organisation's core assets and activities are both threatened with obsolescence; and knowledge and brand capital erode along with the customer and supplier relationships. It is most commonly caused by the introduction of new technologies or regulations, or by changing consumer preferences," said Wood, et al., 2009.[1]

In some ways the manager whose responsibility it is to introduce social media into the organisation has their path already partly cleared. Today's organisations must be able to react quickly and correctly to external change while managing internal change effectively, otherwise they risk becoming uncompetitive either within the marketplace or as an employer of choice.

Of course, reacting to external forces is easier to do; changing the underlying values that drive organisational behaviour can take a long time, even years to achieve.

But the type of change that Wood and his colleagues talked about is vision-led, so it is clear that the manager introducing social media has to be visionary about social media's potential for positive change. To this extent, if the manager is not personally an evangelist for social media, they need to surround themselves and interact with evangelists, so that they can be better informed and become ignited with the spark. A spark-less manager will not inspire confidence in senior management, in peers nor in employees, that's for sure.

Pathways to effective cultural change

There is a recommended approach to culture change. Gagliardi[2] suggests the following be adopted:

- Educate stakeholders as to why change is necessary;
- Communicate the new culture that is desired;
- Use value statements to embed the new cultural requirements;
- Give people the skills, knowledge and capabilities they will need to work differently;
- Create processes, systems and ways of working that enable people to put the new values into practice; and
- Use performance management and rewards to enforce desired behaviours.

Let's break that down to how it can be utilised by the manager charged with introducing social media into the organisation's communication mix.

Educate stakeholders as to why change is necessary

As discussed in Chapter One, there has been a fundamental shift in how consumers talk to each other and how organisations can communicate with them. Sometimes this shift can be felt at the highest level of the company; sometimes it needs to be pointed out to them that 'old' methods still have their relevance, only less so than before; and that interruption methods of communicating *at* them are becoming increasingly cost-ineffective.

Communicating this shift might be as simple to achieve as scanning Chapter One of this report and sending a pdf of it to each individual in the senior management team, with recommendations of what the organisation should consider doing, by when they should do it and who should do what.

Communicate the new culture that is desired

Using case studies of similar organisations that have successfully undergone social media implementation is a useful tactic to employ here. Case studies abound on the internet – just Google 'social media case studies' and you will find plenty of examples, including at the excellent site casestudiesonline.com.

Use value statements to embed the new cultural requirements

Social media introduces a fundamental change in communication strategy. No longer can communication pieces be pumped out at mass markets and those markets expected to just 'sit there and take it'. Markets are becoming ever-more micro-niched (the reader would do well to devour a copy of Greg Verdino's superb *Micromarketing: get big results by thinking and acting small* [http://amzn.to/9AZHOB]) and blast communications are no longer acceptable to an increasingly vocal and disloyal audience.

Today's marketplace demands personal interaction with members of the organisation, not just the opportunity to leave a comment in an impersonal 'contact us' form on the corporate website. Therefore, the culture of truth, trust, transparency and accountability as well as engagement and interaction, which exists outside of the corporation needs to exist inside it as well.

Value statements that encourage openness, truth, trust, transparency and accountability and external (and internal) engagement at all levels of the organisation should become an integral part of how the organisation talks to itself about itself. Posters, regular value statement messages from the leadership, statements positioned on the intranet and system login screens are just some of the opportunities to help the organisation transition to the location that the new communication landscape demands.

Give people the skills, knowledge and capabilities they will need to work differently

Whether it's just a small team that will be initially working on your social media initiatives, or whether you are rolling out a social media technology across the entire organisation (such as the internal Twitter-like application called Yammer, a wiki, videos, blogs or podcasts), you will need to train all of the employees in not just the workings of the tools, but also answer the 'why' questions they will have. You will need to run them through a training programme that explains to them their rights and responsibilities as spokespeople for the organisation, as well as give them guidelines (via your social media policy) on how to engage with the marketplace.

In addition, they will need to know that the organisation will support them in their endeavours and thus, for example, make subject matter experts available if technical questions are asked or perhaps quickly give them approval for an action if it is seen as a valuable customer-retention/goodwill gesture. They will need to be assured that their activities in the social domain will not be seen as a career limiting move should a customer prove particularly troublesome and hard to handle.

Concurrent with the training of the employees in the tools and technologies, there should run an 'expectations management' programme for senior executives and leaders. Social media is not a magic bullet, as has been explained, nor can it solve every communication challenge.

The organisation's leadership needs to have their expectations of what social media can and cannot deliver carefully managed in case something goes wrong at the employee-customer interface and the CEO or chairman decides that the employee should be sacked and all social media initiatives scrapped. Nothing could do more harm to employee relations than a leadership not standing by an employee just because things got a little tough and someone vociferously negative could not be persuaded to change their mind.

Dissidents won't go away just because the organisation is now engaging with them via social media; but the dissidents have all of the tools they need to create online 'heat' for the organisation – better that the organisation also be online and being a part of the conversations taking place so that it can present its own case and correct any factual errors and disinformation.

Create processes, systems and ways of working that enable people to put the new values into practice

Voters are demanding it of their elected representatives in government; pressure groups are demanding it of organisations of all sizes: truth, trust, transparency and accountability. If an organisation is to transition to one that is taking on board the three Ts and an A then it sensibly either engages its HR and communications departments to create change messages and processes, including middle-management and supervisor-level change programmes if required, or it brings in external consultants to do so.

Either way, if middle managers and supervisors are struggling to find ways to enact the required values into the practices of their departments and teams, they will require help.

However, if it is only a team that is changing its processes in order to support that team's sole social media outreach for the organisation, then the same need applies. Processes need to be examined, roles reconfigured where necessary, seating arrangements reviewed in order to best place the organisation's social mediarists so that they can do their job and access the people and material they need.

Other departments and personnel in the organisation should be made aware of the social media team, what its function is, why it exists and what its aims are. Most importantly and alongside the above, personnel from other departments and teams need to be made aware of the need to supply requested information to the social media team as soon as possible, because the social media team are the 'front-line' of engagement with the online public which, as numerous examples can attest, can be vociferous and unruly if not given what they want, or at a minimum feel as they are not being listened to.

Case study: Kryptonite and the blogosphere

In 2004 bike lock manufacturer Kryptonite felt the full force of the blogosphere's wrath.

Kryptonite's range of bike locks were the 'gold standard' of bike locks and were held in high regard by cycle couriers around the world, who depended on their bike for their income. The company was so confident in the product that it had offered a guarantee that anyone able to break or pick the lock would receive a $10,000 reward.

Someone posted a video on YouTube showing how to pick an 'unpickable' Kryptonite lock with nothing more than a BIC pen.

Within hours of the video being posted, e-mails and phone calls were flooding in to Kryptonite's headquarters, asking what the company was going to do about the faulty, 'pickable' locks. Stockists and suppliers around the world wanted to know how to handle the deluge of enquiries they themselves were getting.

Kryptonite worked around the clock with their suppliers, retooling and reconfiguring the locks to again render them unbreakable. What it failed to do, however, was engage with a blogosphere eager to know what the company was doing to rectify the situation and replace faulty locks.

Because Kryptonite was only a micro company of 24 employees, with no in-house web team, its website was managed by a third-party organisation. It was impossible to make quick changes to the website to let cycle couriers and stockists know what the organisation was doing to help them.

Heated debate sprang up in the blogosphere. A blogstorm as it is known began as one disgruntled blogger after another fuelled a flame of negativity, accusing the organisation of not listening (the most heinous crime an organisation can commit in the social media world). In fact, the organisation *was* listening, it just didn't have any means to engage and respond, to enter into the conversation that was wildly carrying on around it.

Donna Tocci, the communication manager at the time (and, like with every micro company, a lot of other responsibilities as well as those of her job title), has publicly stated that she wished the organisation did have the tools in place to respond and join in the conversation, and that instead of everyone in the organisation focusing their attention on packing boxes of new, replacement locks and shipping them out to stockists as quickly as they possibly could, someone from the company should have updated the website and engaged *somehow* with the blogosphere.

Even when she did eventually engage with journalists and influential bloggers, the barrage of criticism against the company by then was so great that voices of reason couldn't be heard.

It is only recently that a Google search on Kryptonite bike locks *doesn't* return results showing disgruntled bloggers venting their anger and disappointment at Kryptonite's lack of engagement with its various online stakeholders.

Use performance management and rewards to enforce desired behaviours

This is where HR and the creative manager can construct a series of rewards based on employees displaying the 3Ts and an A set of behaviours.

This can be not only for the social mediarist employees themselves, but also for those employees who directly engage with them; the subject matter experts, departmental liaisons and so on.

At an organisation-wide level, these behaviours can be equally rewarded by creative thinking around new processes and systems that allow for desired behaviours to be displayed.

The impact of changing the way a company communicates

Very few people welcome change with open arms unless they are really fed up with the current state of affairs. So changing the way their organisation communicates, either internally or externally has the capability of ruffling some feathers and causing some consternation.

Let’s have a look at what the possible impacts are, firstly from an internal perspective, then from an external perspective.

Internal impacts

Changing how communication takes place with itself and with the outside world can lead to employee and leadership stress, as the rules of the new communication landscape are still new and in some areas still in discussion. As mentioned above, boundaries and policies need to be put in place so that not only are employees given guidelines by the company as to expected behaviour, but also that senior management and the Board are not suddenly surprised by an event that eventuates from the organisation’s first steps into the social media world and shut down social media initiatives before they have had a chance to make a positive impact.

Subject matter experts (known as SMEs) and departmental liaisons with the organisation’s social mediarists need to be aware that they could receive requests for information and assistance at any moment and that they should respond as soon as practicable. This may not be something that these SMEs and departmental liaisons have at the forefront of their minds and so some negotiation of priorities and organisational goals may need to be carried out.

External impacts

When the organisation first opens itself up to the world via social media it no doubt does so with both positive anticipation and fear; positive expectation that good things will happen (after all, lots of other organisations are reporting good things) and fear, because of the prospect of a tsunami of protest and abuse that can be hurled at it.

There is little doubt that good things will happen if the organisation approaches its social media initiatives correctly (the reader of this report is almost assured of success if they follow its guidelines) and that equally sometimes a floodgate of abuse will be opened.

However, it is the experience of many of us who have been around the social media landscape for a while that storms of abuse very quickly die down to a trickle of protest unless the organisation is currently in a crisis situation. In those instances the organisation’s PR resources will be doing everything to calm the storm; keeping the vociferous social media world up-to-date with the latest information, still images, videos, interviews and status reports is what the correctly-resourced social mediarist can do best.

As soon as the organisation puts its toe into the conversation pool of social media, however, its response time to enquiries and comments will need to be shortened dramatically. In the social media world even 24 hours is too long. Unless organisations specifically state that their various social media platforms are only monitored during business hours (in what country and in what time zone), the expectation is that someone from the organisation will be able to respond within two-to-three hours. This places considerable burden on the organisation, but better it be upfront about its monitoring and response times to the general public than let the public think that someone is monitoring the various social media channels (even the ones the company isn't yet active in) all the time.

The positives of sharing viewpoints

What these new social media technologies allow for is a conversation to take place between the organisation; and any and all stakeholder groups.

This allows for different viewpoints to be shared and also allows every party to feel that they have at least been allowed to contribute to the conversation, even if their particular viewpoint was not 'heard' or understood correctly. Misapprehensions, miscommunication and mere mistakes can be corrected, viewpoints can be varied and the positions of protagonists taken into account.

Through such dialogic process a clearer understanding of 'how the marketplace really is' can be gained, to the organisation's benefit.

Key principles for communicating change

Courtesy of my friend Shel Holtz[3] are the following fundamental principles for communicating change within the organisation:

- The primary channel internally should be face-to-face because it is dynamic, interactive, encourages involvement and allows complex messages to be explained, questioned and clarified;
- The secondary channels should be digital, for reasons of timeliness and ease of access;
- Print can be used to provide support materials, for sharing with families, as an example and for reference purposes;
- Senior leaders are the key communicators of vision, the key communicators of a case for action and the key communicators of the strategic priorities of the change process;
- The senior leaders are supported at the operational level by line supervisors and managers, who are key to communicating operational information;
- Communication processes must be a balance of information gathering as well as information delivery;
- The case for change needs to be made persuasively because people don't change unless they believe there's a good reason to do so;
- People are more open to change if they have a say in how the organisation and they themselves, need to change;
- They are also more likely to change in the preferred direction if they are given support to change, recognition and

Under-communicating change	Over-communicating change
Information vacuums thrive, and fill with rumours	Counteracts rumours, unreliable messages
Reinforces pretence of business as usual	Keeps the truth up-to-date
Leaves problems unattended	Changes culture faster
Normal channels malfunction	Uses new information routes
Questions go unanswered Ideas	Reduces fear of openness, honesty
and opportunities are lost	Counteracts skepticism, mistrust
Morale fails	Corrects ambiguity, uncertainty

Figure 1: Shel Hotlz outlines the dangers of under- and over-communicating during periods of change

Case study: Price Chopper and a rogue employee[5]

A SHOPPER at a Price Chopper store tweeted a brief complaint about the store, praised a competitor and posted a picture of some questionably-arranged signage. A Price Chopper employee then decided to ‘get back’ at the shopper by contacting the shopper’s employer (mentioned in the shopper’s Twitter bio) and demanding disciplinary action be taken against them. The Price Chopper employee e-mailed what appeared to be a random list of executives at the shopper’s workplace, including the shopper’s supervisor, labelling the individual as destructive and negative. They suggested that the shopper’s distaste for their stores could jeopardise the relationship between Price Chopper and the company where the individual is (thankfully still) employed.

It appears that the Price Chopper employee is still employed, which is nothing if not incredibly gracious, but one wonders how closely supervised they now are and whether they have any access to social media channels and tools.

rewards for changing and given clear guidelines around what behaviours are to go and what are to be encouraged; and

- Change communication must wherever possible be timely, open, truthful, trusting of the employee, transparent and those delivering the change message (*especially* senior management) must be held accountable for their words and actions (because what they do speaks louder than what they say).

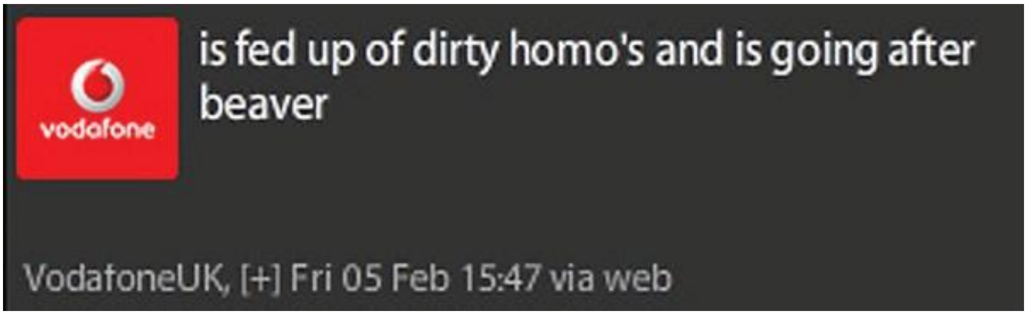
There will no doubt be some employees who feel that not enough communication takes place, no matter what the organisation does, but it is better to over-communicate than under-communicate.

Under- and over-communicating during periods of change[4] can cause detrimental repercussions for an organisation, as outlined in Figure 1.

Control versus conversation

Nothing scares the senior or middle manager more than a conversation that gets out of hand, leading to frayed tempers and raised voices. The carefully crafted and honed position of the company can be substantially damaged by an employee who fails to step back from the edge of a conversation, the recent fiasco at US supermarket chain Price Chopper being a case in point.

Vodaphone UK’s recent Twitter debacle is another classic example, as follows:



is fed up of dirty homo's and is going after beaver

VodafoneUK, [+] Fri 05 Feb 15:47 via web

Figure 2: VodaphoneUK’s Twitter debacle – THE tweet

In all probability a tweet was sent out in error (accidentally tweeting on the wrong account on Tweetdeck), or a direct message went public instead of staying private. The company very quickly deleted the tweet, but not before it had been retweeted and the image of the tweet linked to by hundreds of thousands of members of the Twittersphere.

Equally, leaders and their lawyers are scared of things being said in all innocence that come back to haunt the company at some future date.

But the conversation cannot be controlled. Control of the 'message' was lost centuries ago, when Johannes Gutenberg handed the ability to publish and distribute one's own version of the message to not just the church and state, but to the common man too (if they could afford it). That ability is now available for free (all you need is access to the internet), so control of a message is beyond any organisation's grasp. There are too many millions of people who can decide for themselves what the message means and share their interpretations with others.

Organisations can choose to ignore the very real fact that the communication landscape has changed, or embrace it and play alongside those already in it.

Besides, so far in social media's history it has been the employee who has suffered long-term damage to their career via social media (sacked for lying when their Facebook status updates, for example, tell a different story to the one they told their boss), rather than the other way around. All throughout history, the truth has eventually gotten out. All that social media does is intensify the magnifying glass' focus and dramatically shorten the amount of time it takes to bring the truth out into the open, as well as give the online world the opportunity to vociferously share its opinion about the organisation and its lack of truthfulness.

Through the internet, the people in your markets are discovering and inventing new ways to converse. They're talking about your business. They're telling one another the truth, in very human voices.

There's a new conversation between and among your market and your workers. It's making them smarter and it's enabling them to discover their human voices.

You have two choices. You can continue to lock yourself behind facile corporate words and happytalk brochures. Or you can join the conversation.[6]

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4. Holtz, *ibid*.
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Chapter 5: Social media management

Risk management

Most risk-averse organisations analyse any potential risk against potential reward in a very serious manner. For some, even a hint of risk will ensure that a manager somewhere along the chain of command will say 'no' to any social media initiative lest they put at risk either their own manager, their employer or their own career.

Similarly, opening up an organisation to the social media world also opens it up to possible conflicts, ethical challenges, disgruntled ex-customers, industry and company-level pressure groups and the *real* views of employees both past and present. Most lawyers that I have spoken with are exceedingly cautious and conservative in their views about social media, fearing that one slip of the tongue by an employee or one indiscretion made public through a social media channel can land the company in a quagmire of litigation and public affairs issues, with accompanying media frenzy.

There is no simple argument that can allay the fears lawyers hold, which means the company must strive to be ethical in all of its dealings so that the chances of slip-ups occurring, or indiscretions being aired, are

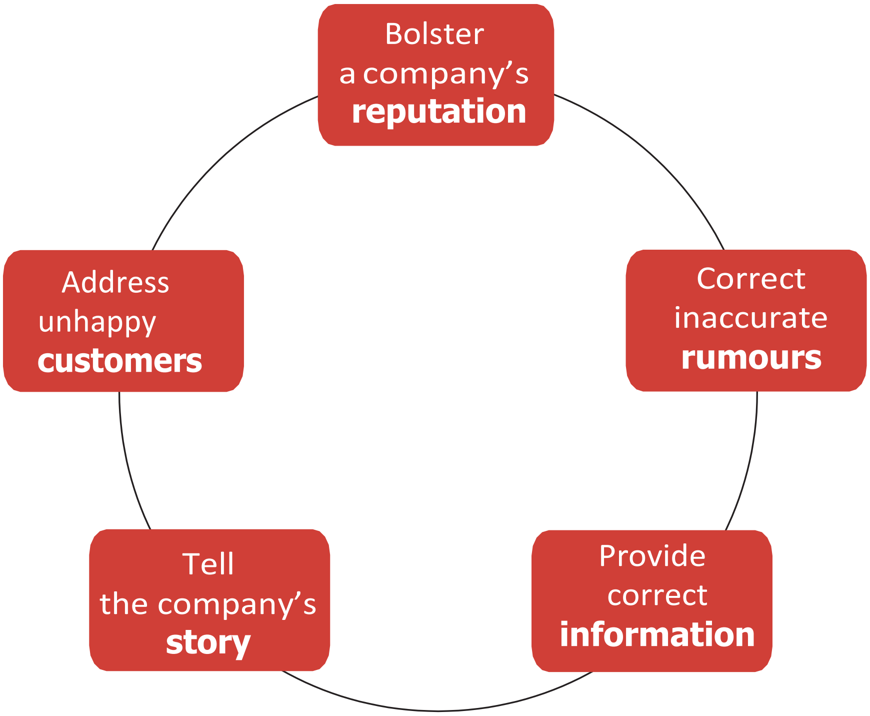

Bolster a company's **reputation**
Correct inaccurate **rumours**
Provide correct **information**
Tell the company's **story**
Address unhappy **customers**

Diagram 1: The social media risk management model reduced to zero. No easy task and no CEO can sleep at night completely confident that every employee is completely honest and trustworthy, nor that every decision made within the company is the right one.

But time and again in the social media world, organisations who have been let down by rogue employees have been able to quickly gather support despite the rogue employee's actions because they quickly admitted to the mistake, spelt out what they had done to rectify it and outlined what they were doing to ensure it never happened again. The more public the organisation makes such disclosures, the quicker the support comes and the longer the goodwill seems to last.

In addition, the more 'social capital' that has been built up by the organisation, the quicker the 'fans' come to that organisation's defence. Building up social capital is easy: be involved with the social media community and be a part of the conversations taking place around the world about your brand, your company or your key people; help dispel any rumours and correct any factual errors floating around.

With help from Kevin Magee, I have developed the RRISC model, which stands for:

- Reputation;
- Rumours;
- Information;
- Story; and
- Customers.

Social media allows organisations to manage and indeed bolster their online reputation. Google loves websites where the content changes frequently (the more frequently the better) and this allows websites to work towards positioning themselves at the top of search engine rankings based on keywords and brand names.

Social media also allows organisations to quickly correct any inaccurate rumours floating around as well as monitor keywords and brand names in real time for any mention that might be inaccurate.

An adjunct to the previous point, social media allows for the dissemination of correct information, as well as providing excellent methods of telling and helping spread the company's story.

Finally, but equally importantly, social media gives an organisation access to previously unseen disgruntled customers, helping them transition from a disgruntled customer to an evangelist of the company or brand.

Put them all together and you have an impressive set of 'counter points' to the naysayers in the organisation.

But risk management not only concerns what happens outside of the organisation's walls and what customers feel about you; equally as important is managing the risk of social media and how your employees engage with it.

Therefore every organisation needs to have a policy in place that spells out clearly what the employee's rights and responsibilities are around social media. Thankfully the internet is full of examples.

A terrific resource is the online database of social media policies at http://bit.ly/3z9mDS.

Every organisation must deal with risk in its own way and no undertaking of any kind is without risk, but the risks of social media are dwarfed by potential rewards.

Monitoring

It's all well and good to be producing great content and putting it out there, but is anyone listening?

Equally, is anyone within the organisation listening to the customer? Where does the voice of the customer (VoC) figure into marketing, sales and communication plans?

Thankfully, social media has a ship full of tools that allow organisations to monitor what is being said about them, their brands, their products, their services and their people.

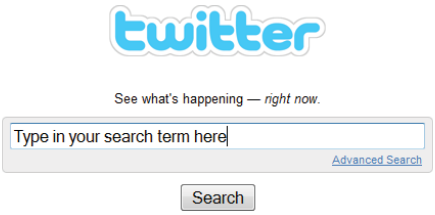
Also, most of those tools are no-cost, which is great for already-stretched budgets.

Let's have a look at just a few of them.

Twitter

Twitter, as Tim O'Reilly and Sarah Milstein point out,[1] comes with two superhero strengths that everyone wants: "The power to read people's thoughts and the ability to overhear conversations as if you were a fly on the wall."

Go to http://search.twitter.com and search for a keyword, brand or company name that is important to you.

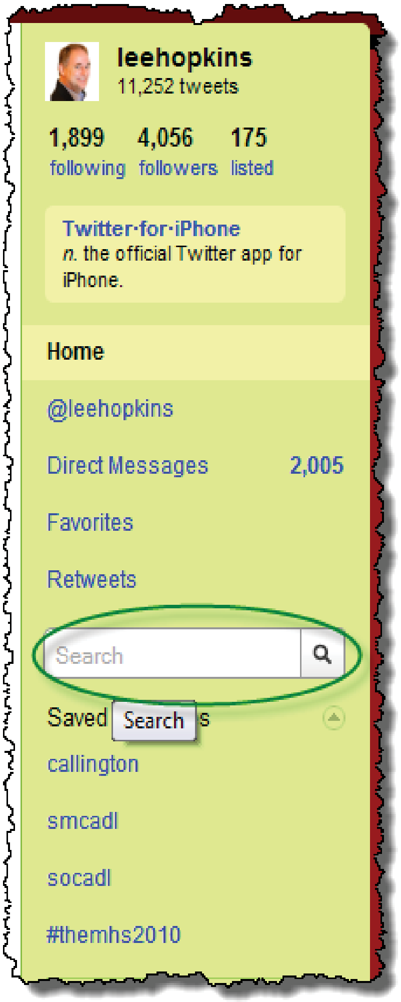


twitter
See what's happening — *right now.*
Type in your search term here
Advanced Search
Search

Figure 1: Search box at http://search.twitter.com.

To keep that search and its results permanently, either go to Twitter.com, log into your profile and scan the right hand column for a search box, or open up your twitter client (e.g. TweetDeck, Seesmic, Digsby, *inter alia*) and use their search mechanisms.

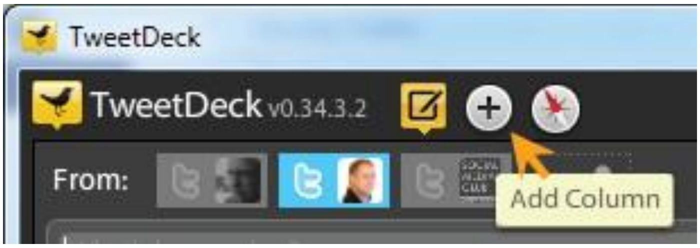
Here is how it looks for my profile at Twitter.com:



leehopkins
11,252 tweets
1,899 following
4,056 followers
175 listed
Twitter·for·iPhone
n. the official Twitter app for iPhone.
Home
@leehopkins
Direct Messages 2,005
Favorites
Retweets
Search
Saved Search s
callington
smcadl
socadl
#themhs2010

Figure 2: Search box at Twitter.com

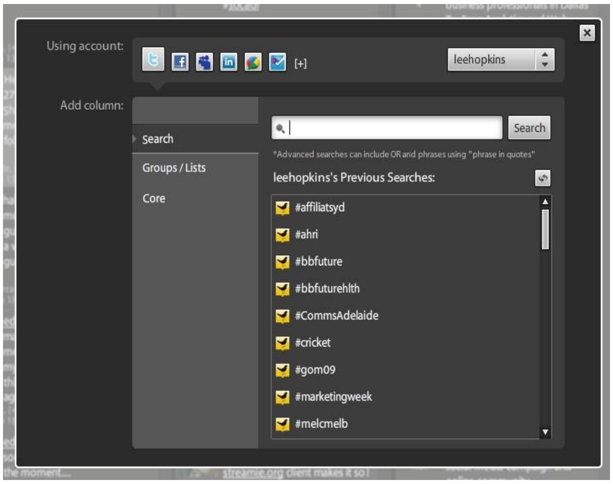
Here is how it looks if I search for 'albatross' in TweetDeck. Firstly, I add a new column (Figure 3).



TweetDeck
TweetDeck v0.34.3.2
From:
Add Column

Figure 3: Add a column in TweetDeck

Then I enter my search word into the search box that pops up (Figure 4):



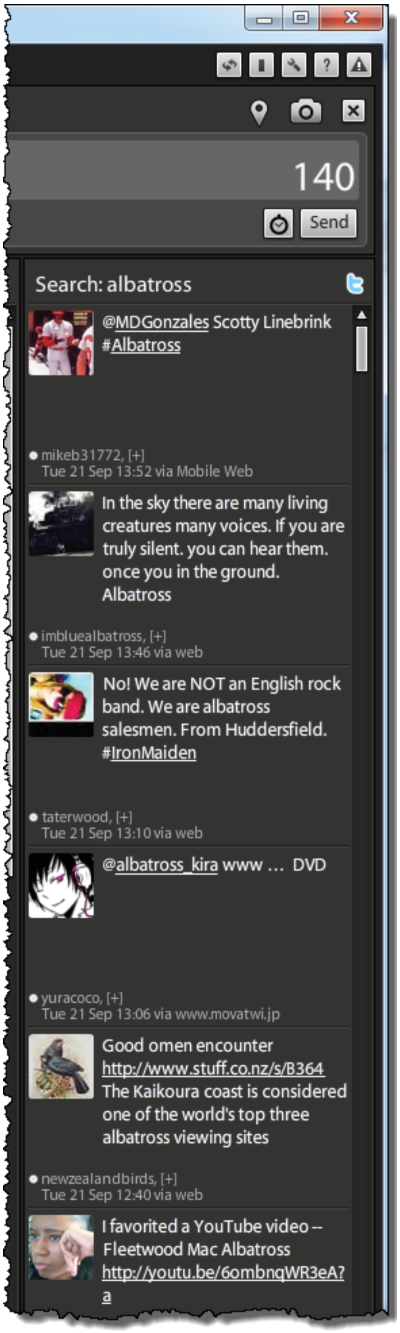
Using account: leehopkins

Add column:

*Advanced searches can include OR and phrases using "phrase in quotes"

leehopkins's Previous Searches:

- #affiliatsyd
- #ahri
- #bbfuture
- #bbfuturehlth
- #CommsAdelaide
- #cricket
- #gom09
- #marketingweek
- #melcmelb



Search: albatross

@MDGonzales Scotty Linebrink #Albatross

mikeb31772, [+]
Tue 21 Sep 13:52 via Mobile Web

In the sky there are many living creatures many voices. If you are truly silent. you can hear them. once you in the ground. Albatross

imbluealbatross, [+]
Tue 21 Sep 13:46 via web

No! We are NOT an English rock band. We are albatross salesmen. From Huddersfield. #IronMaiden

taterwood, [+]
Tue 21 Sep 13:10 via web

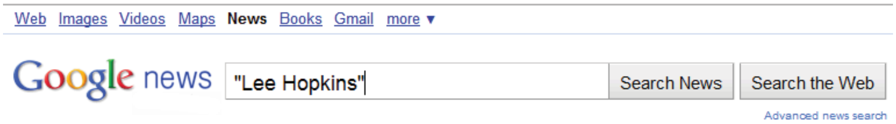
@albatross_kira www … DVD

yuracoco, [+]
Tue 21 Sep 13:06 via www.movatwi.jp

Good omen encounter http://www.stuff.co.nz/s/B364 The Kaikoura coast is considered one of the world's top three albatross viewing sites

newzealandbirds, [+]
Tue 21 Sep 12:40 via web

I favorited a YouTube video -- Fleetwood Mac Albatross http://youtu.be/6ombnqWR3eA?a


Web
Images
Videos
Maps
News
Books
Gmail
more ▾
Google news
Search News
Search the Web
Advanced news search

"Lee Hopkins"

Figure 6: Google News search box

look for the 'News' link at the top left of your browser page (Figure 6).

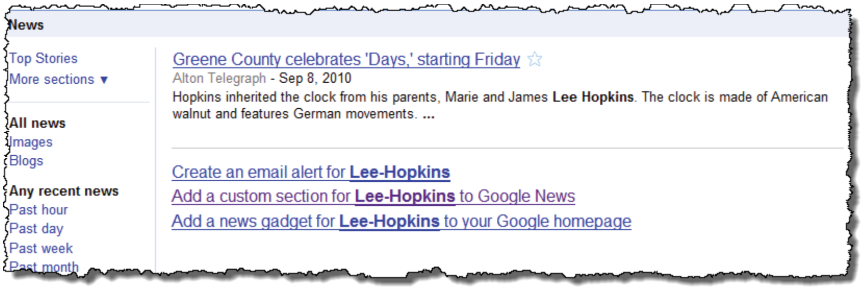
Enter your search term and click the 'Search News' button. In the above example I have entered 'Lee Hopkins'.

The results page shows just one result today – a story in the *Alton Telegraph* seemingly about a clock that has been passed down from one generation to another (Figure 7).

I can also expand my search terms to, say, the past week or past month (see the left hand column in Figure 7). And as you can see from Figure 8, I can have those results e-mailed to me.

You can also use the power of RSS technology to bring your search results to you.

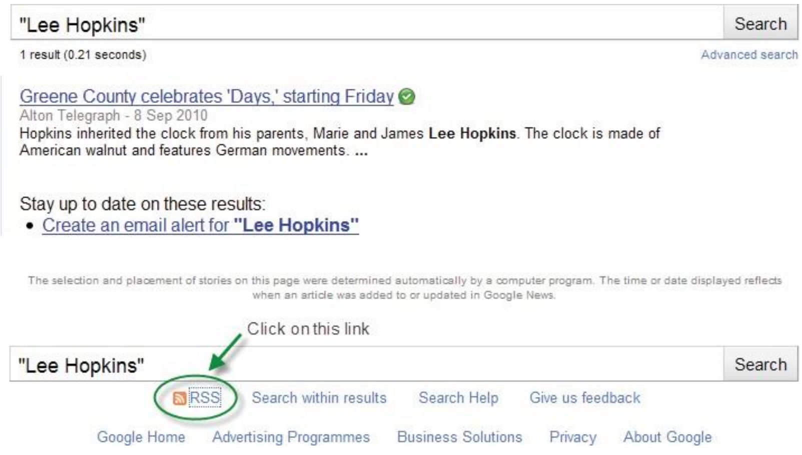
As an example, I can track the search term Lee Hopkins in Google Reader or any RSS reader (I personally use FeedDemon from FeedDemon.com on my pc and NetNewsWire from netnewswire app.com on my iPad). To start, run a search like the one above then note the RSS link below the search results (Figure 8).


News
Top Stories
More sections ▾
All news
Images
Blogs
Any recent news
Past hour
Past day
Past week
Past month

Greene County celebrates 'Days,' starting Friday
Alton Telegraph - Sep 8, 2010
Hopkins inherited the clock from his parents, Marie and James **Lee Hopkins**. The clock is made of American walnut and features German movements. ...

Create an email alert for **Lee-Hopkins**
Add a custom section for **Lee-Hopkins** to Google News
Add a news gadget for **Lee-Hopkins** to your Google homepage

Figure 7: Search results on Google News, which includes online news publications, images and blogs


Search
Advanced search
Search
RSS
Search within results
Search Help
Give us feedback
Google Home
Advertising Programmes
Business Solutions
Privacy
About Google

"Lee Hopkins"

1 result (0.21 seconds)

Greene County celebrates 'Days,' starting Friday
Alton Telegraph - 8 Sep 2010
Hopkins inherited the clock from his parents, Marie and James **Lee Hopkins**. The clock is made of American walnut and features German movements. ...

Stay up to date on these results:
- Create an email alert for **"Lee Hopkins"**

The selection and placement of stories on this page were determined automatically by a computer program. The time or date displayed reflects when an article was added to or updated in Google News.

Click on this link

"Lee Hopkins"

Figure 8: RSS link on Google News search results page

Clicking on the RSS link will bring you to a page in Google that offers you the chance to save the search in an RSS capture tool such as FeedDemon, NetNewsWire, Google Reader or similar (Figure 9).

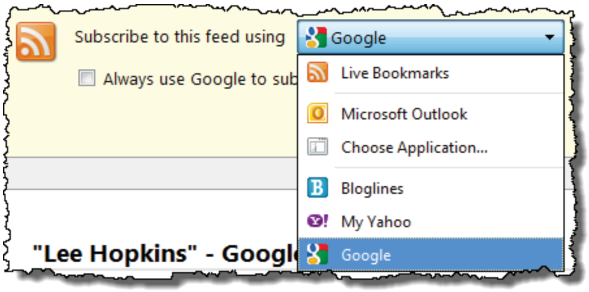


Figure 9: Subscribe to a search result RSS feed

By utilising a RSS reader application you can quickly access all of your searches in the one location, rather than having to type and run each search separately each day. Indeed, most RSS readers will query the results database every 15-30 minutes, so results can be really ‘fresh’. On Twitter, where conversations can flow fast and furious, search results are updated every 60 seconds.

Other tools

Just about every platform available in social media has a search function, allowing you to scour it for information. Most search results will allow you to save your search in your RSS feed reader of choice so that the information comes to you, instead of you wasting hours of valuable time hopping all over the internet.

Measuring

In the traditional world of marketing measurement, determining the effectiveness of a print or television campaign is tricky, unless a specific and traceable call to action is made.

In the online world however, everything is measurable, right down to which version of online ad copy drew the most sales, or which product video generated the most sales revenue or reduced the most calls into the customer service centre.

There are a dazzling number of tools and websites that offer measuring capabilities, but not every site meets every need. Therefore, careful consideration and determining the right tool for the job is essential if time and money is not to be wasted.

Let’s first consider what you might want to measure, seeing as there are almost endless variations of tools and KPIs. Depending on your business goal (yes, any measurement must always tie back to an activity which is driven by a business goal) you might want to measure:

- Direct and/or indirect traffic to your site and/or blog;
- Online brand mentions;
- Leads;
- Brand awareness;
- Sales;
- Customer satisfaction scores;
- Brand perception;
- Comments on your social media channels;
- Frequency of customers/peers linking to your content;
- Speed of the sales cycle;
- Percentage of repeat business;
- Cost per lead;
- Number of members/followers;
- Number of comments/ideas;
- Issue resolution time;
- Account turnover;
- Employee turnover;
- Hiring/recruiting;
- Product adoption rate;
- Brand loyalty;

- Share of conversation;
- Sentiment;
- Community engagement; and
- Competitor activity.

I reiterate these are just some of the things that can be measured. Let’s examine how.

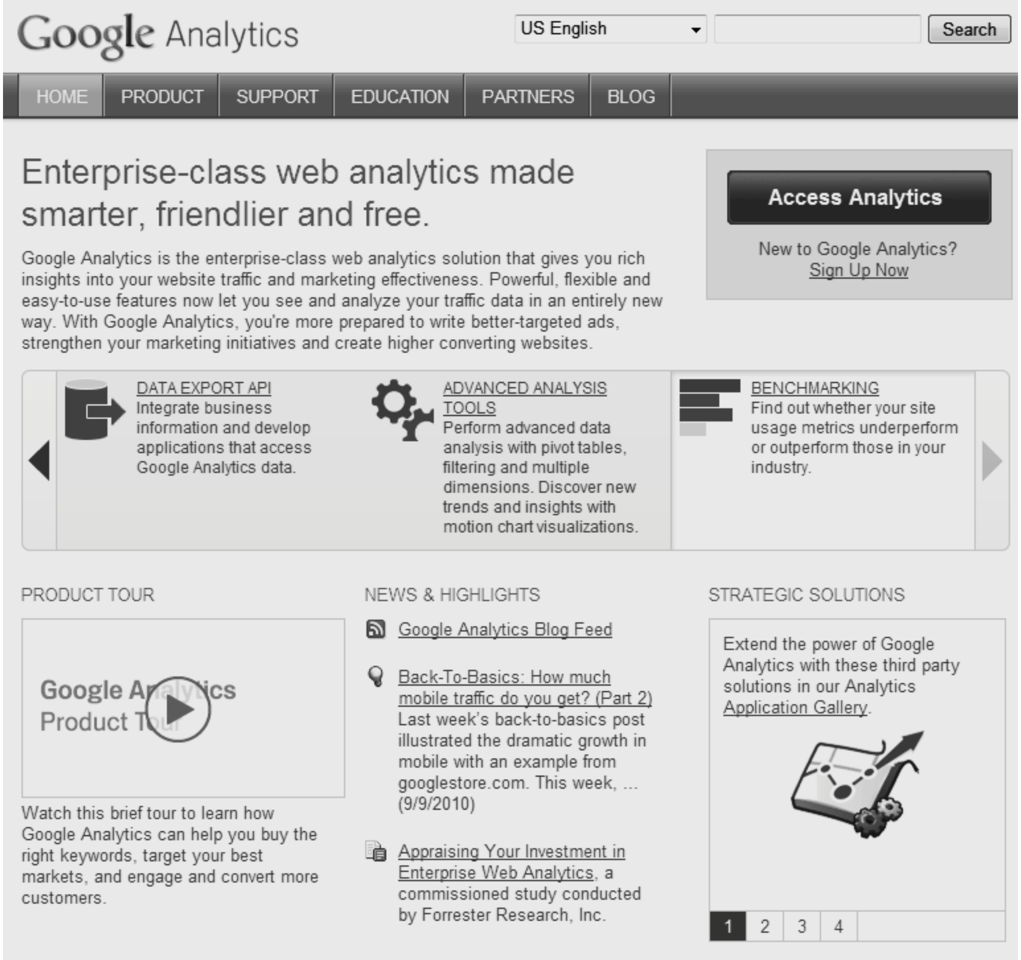
Analysing on-site interactions

Google Analytics

When measuring what happens on your company website, blog or public forum, the free analytics tool produced by Google, Google Analytics, comes into its own (Figures 10 and 11).

By adding a small piece of JavaScript code to your online property you can track interactions on your site, see where changes or additions have helped or hindered your cause, monitor your reports and automatically alert you to significant changes in data patterns.

To enable Google Analytics for your online property, go to http://www.google.com/analytics (Figure 10) and if you don’t already have an account, sign in with your Google or Gmail account.



Enterprise-class web analytics made smarter, friendlier and free.

Google Analytics is the enterprise-class web analytics solution that gives you rich insights into your website traffic and marketing effectiveness. Powerful, flexible and easy-to-use features now let you see and analyze your traffic data in an entirely new way. With Google Analytics, you're more prepared to write better-targeted ads, strengthen your marketing initiatives and create higher converting websites.

New to Google Analytics? Sign Up Now

DATA EXPORT API
Integrate business information and develop applications that access Google Analytics data.

ADVANCED ANALYSIS TOOLS
Perform advanced data analysis with pivot tables, filtering and multiple dimensions. Discover new trends and insights with motion chart visualizations.

BENCHMARKING
Find out whether your site usage metrics underperform or outperform those in your industry.

PRODUCT TOUR

Watch this brief tour to learn how Google Analytics can help you buy the right keywords, target your best markets, and engage and convert more customers.

NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS

Google Analytics Blog Feed

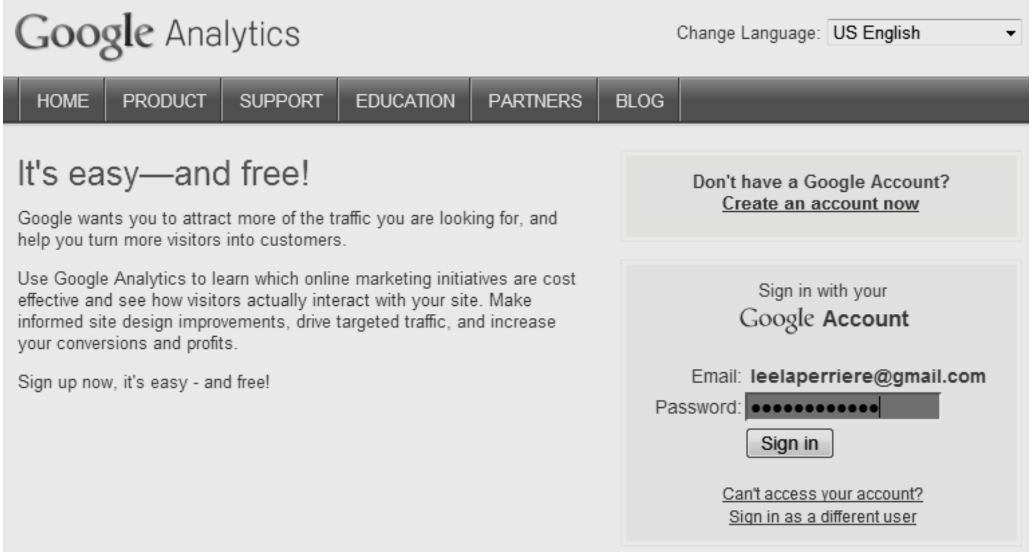
Back-To-Basics: How much mobile traffic do you get? (Part 2)
Last week’s back-to-basics post illustrated the dramatic growth in mobile with an example from googlestore.com. This week, ... (9/9/2010)

Appraising Your Investment in Enterprise Web Analytics, a commissioned study conducted by Forrester Research, Inc.

STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS

Extend the power of Google Analytics with these third party solutions in our Analytics Application Gallery.

Figure 10: Google Analytics home page


Google Analytics
Change Language: US English
HOME
PRODUCT
SUPPORT
EDUCATION
PARTNERS
BLOG
Sign in
Can't access your account?
Sign in as a different user

It's easy—and free!

Google wants you to attract more of the traffic you are looking for, and help you turn more visitors into customers.

Use Google Analytics to learn which online marketing initiatives are cost effective and see how visitors actually interact with your site. Make informed site design improvements, drive targeted traffic, and increase your conversions and profits.

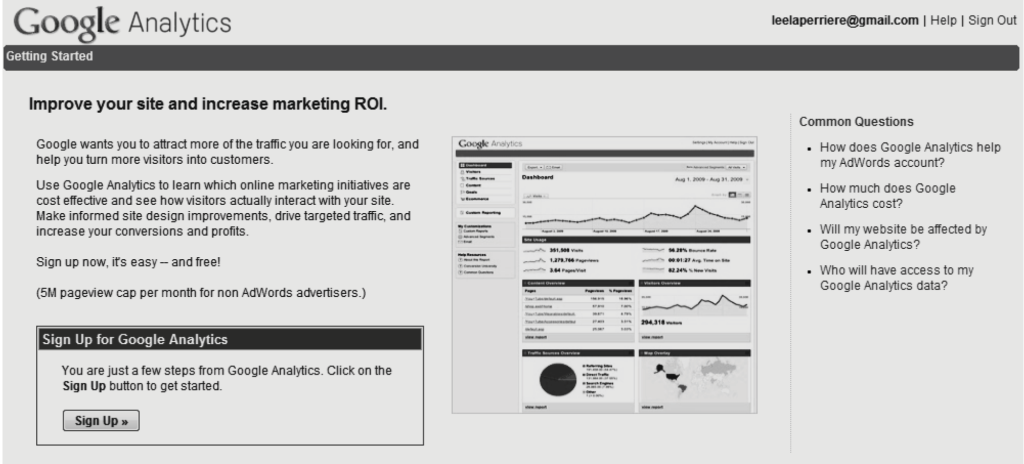
Sign up now, it's easy - and free!

Don't have a Google Account?
Create an account now

Sign in with your Google Account

Email: leelaperriere@gmail.com
Password: ●●●●●●●●●●●●●

Figure 11: Sign in to Google Analytics with your Google or Gmail account


Google Analytics
leelaperriere@gmail.com | Help | Sign Out
Getting Started
Sign Up »

Improve your site and increase marketing ROI.

Google wants you to attract more of the traffic you are looking for, and help you turn more visitors into customers.

Use Google Analytics to learn which online marketing initiatives are cost effective and see how visitors actually interact with your site. Make informed site design improvements, drive targeted traffic, and increase your conversions and profits.

Sign up now, it's easy -- and free!

(5M pageview cap per month for non AdWords advertisers.)

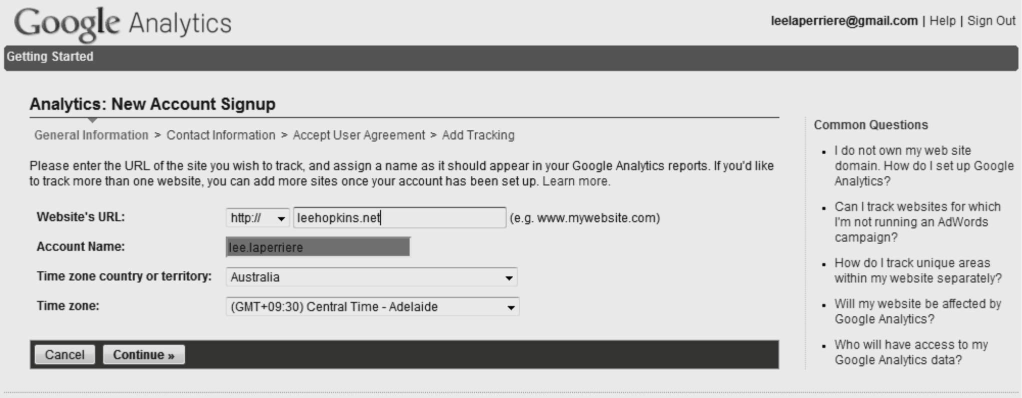
Sign Up for Google Analytics

You are just a few steps from Google Analytics. Click on the **Sign Up** button to get started.

Common Questions

- How does Google Analytics help my AdWords account?
- How much does Google Analytics cost?
- Will my website be affected by Google Analytics?
- Who will have access to my Google Analytics data?

Figure 12: Getting started in Google Analytics


Google Analytics
leelaperriere@gmail.com | Help | Sign Out
Getting Started
Cancel
Continue »

Analytics: New Account Signup

General Information > Contact Information > Accept User Agreement > Add Tracking

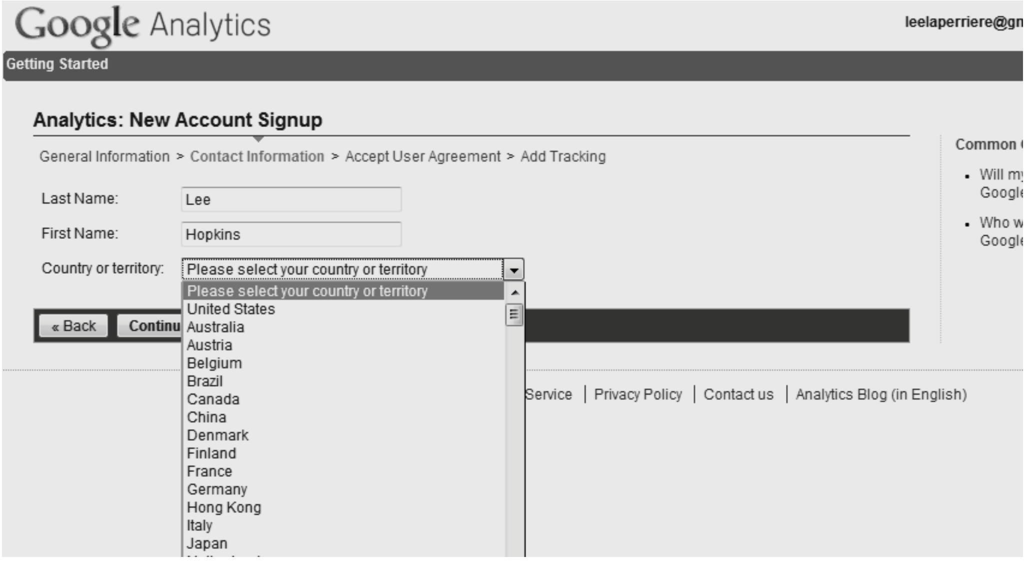
Please enter the URL of the site you wish to track, and assign a name as it should appear in your Google Analytics reports. If you'd like to track more than one website, you can add more sites once your account has been set up. Learn more.

Website's URL: http:// leehopkins.net (e.g. www.mywebsite.com)
Account Name: lee.laperriere
Time zone country or territory: Australia
Time zone: (GMT+09:30) Central Time - Adelaide

Common Questions

- I do not own my web site domain. How do I set up Google Analytics?
- Can I track websites for which I'm not running an AdWords campaign?
- How do I track unique areas within my website separately?
- Will my website be affected by Google Analytics?
- Who will have access to my Google Analytics data?

Figure 13: Google Analytics new account sign up screen


Google Analytics
leelaperriere@gn
Getting Started
Common
Will my Googl
Who w Googl
« Back
Continu
Service | Privacy Policy | Contact us | Analytics Blog (in English)

Analytics: New Account Signup

General Information > Contact Information > Accept User Agreement > Add Tracking

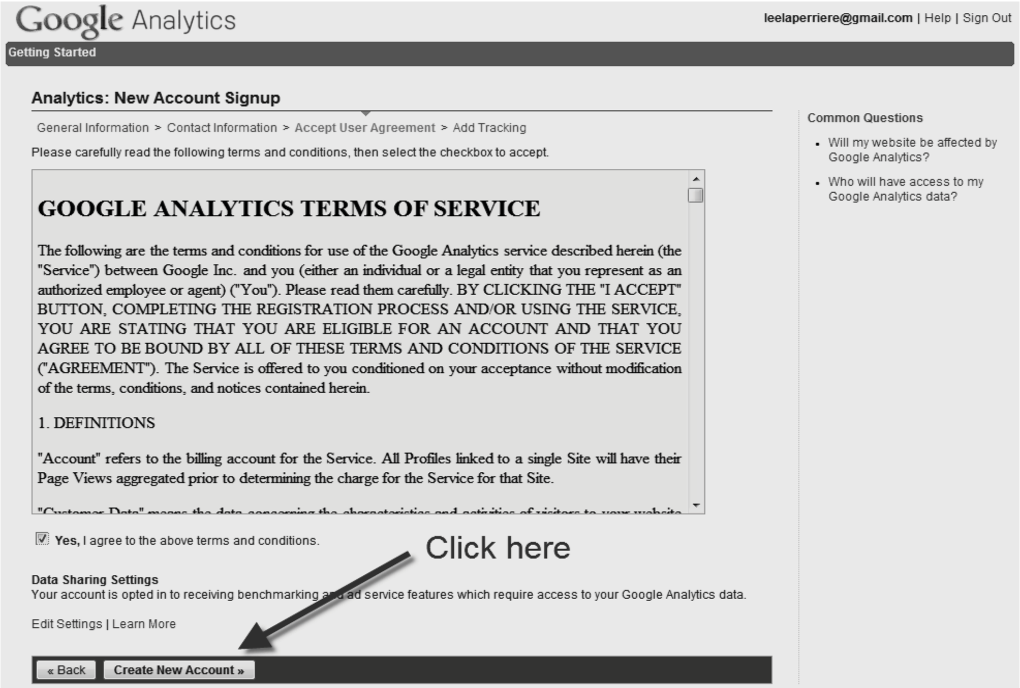
Last Name: Lee
First Name: Hopkins
Country or territory: Please select your country or territory

Please select your country or territory
United States
Australia
Austria
Belgium
Brazil
Canada
China
Denmark
Finland
France
Germany
Hong Kong
Italy
Japan

Figure 14: Contact information screen

In case you are wondering, Lee Laperriere is my avatar's name in the 3D virtual world Second Life and I set up a Gmail account so that I could create some of the screenshots used in this section of this report.

You'll notice that on the right hand side of the screen in Figure 12 Google has placed some common questions related to this page. Google has, in fact, incorporated this feature throughout the Analytics site, so


Google Analytics
leelaperriere@gmail.com | Help | Sign Out
Getting Started
Common Questions
Will my website be affected by Google Analytics?
Who will have access to my Google Analytics data?
Click here
Edit Settings | Learn More
« Back
Create New Account »

Analytics: New Account Signup

General Information > Contact Information > Accept User Agreement > Add Tracking

Please carefully read the following terms and conditions, then select the checkbox to accept.

GOOGLE ANALYTICS TERMS OF SERVICE

The following are the terms and conditions for use of the Google Analytics service described herein (the "Service") between Google Inc. and you (either an individual or a legal entity that you represent as an authorized employee or agent) ("You"). Please read them carefully. BY CLICKING THE "I ACCEPT" BUTTON, COMPLETING THE REGISTRATION PROCESS AND/OR USING THE SERVICE, YOU ARE STATING THAT YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR AN ACCOUNT AND THAT YOU AGREE TO BE BOUND BY ALL OF THESE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE SERVICE ("AGREEMENT"). The Service is offered to you conditioned on your acceptance without modification of the terms, conditions, and notices contained herein.

1. DEFINITIONS

"Account" refers to the billing account for the Service. All Profiles linked to a single Site will have their Page Views aggregated prior to determining the charge for the Service for that Site.

☑ **Yes,** I agree to the above terms and conditions.

Data Sharing Settings
Your account is opted in to receiving benchmarking and ad service features which require access to your Google Analytics data.

Figure 15: Terms of Service screen

that no matter where you go or what level of data you are looking at, helpful advice is close at hand. If you are number blind like me, those 'Common Questions' can be mighty helpful indeed!

As the screen suggests, click on the 'Sign Up' button to get started with Google Analytics.

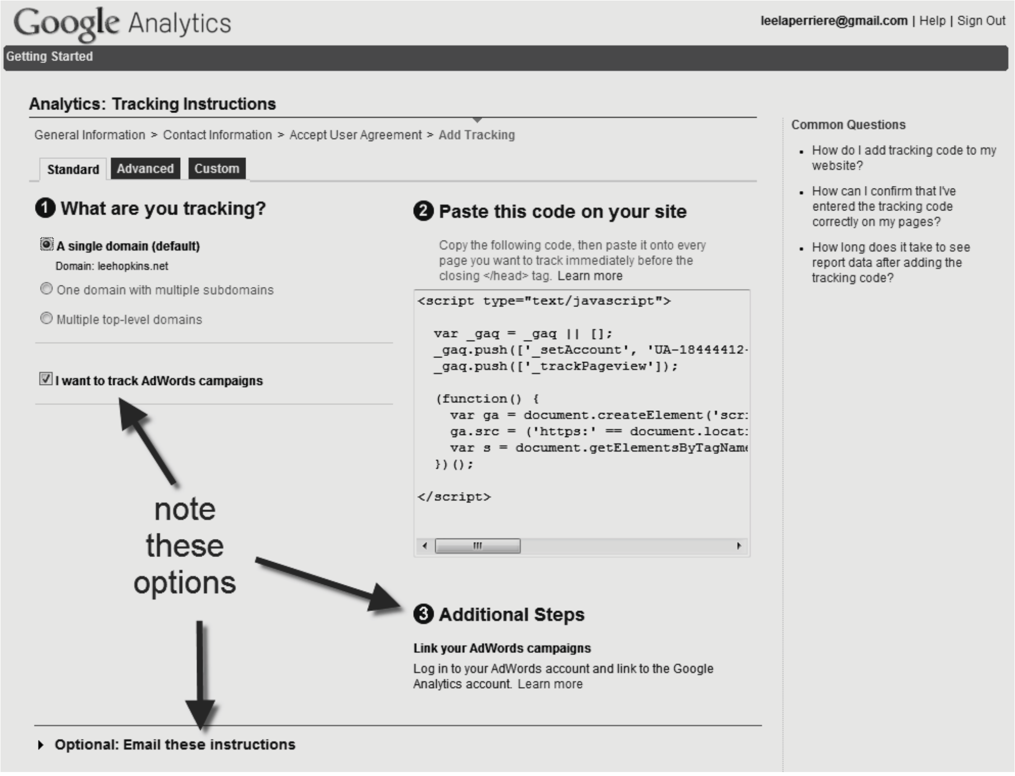
You'll see from Figure 13 that I've adjusted the 'Time zone country or territory' to Australia and the 'Time zone' to Adelaide, because that's where I reside. Adjust those settings to your own requirements and add in the URL of the online property (for example, your main website or your blog) that you wish Google to track – I've typed in my blog's URL. Then, click on the 'Continue' button; you'll be presented with a screen like that seen in Figure 14.

As per Figure 14, add your contact information and click on the Continue button to progress to Figure 15, the obligatory 'Terms of Service' that you have to agree to before you can progress any further.

Once you have ticked the 'Yes, I agree…' box you will find yourself on a screen that very closely resembles Figure 16.

Whoever is in charge of the online property you wish to track will need to add in the code seen in step 2 in Figure 16. The option exists to e-mail them the code, or else e-mail yourself the code to keep as a backup (although you can always come back into Analytics later on and see the code again).

Note also that in Figure 16 I have ticked that I want to track Google AdWords campaigns. You would tick that box when, for example, you are researching which


Google Analytics
leelaperriere@gmail.com | Help | Sign Out
Getting Started
Standard
Advanced
Custom
Learn more
Learn more
Optional: Email these instructions

Analytics: Tracking Instructions

General Information > Contact Information > Accept User Agreement > Add Tracking

❶ What are you tracking?

● A single domain (default)
Domain: leehopkins.net
○ One domain with multiple subdomains
○ Multiple top-level domains

☑ I want to track AdWords campaigns

❷ Paste this code on your site

Copy the following code, then paste it onto every page you want to track immediately before the closing </head> tag. Learn more

```
<script type="text/javascript">

  var _gaq = _gaq || [];
  _gaq.push(['_setAccount', 'UA-18444412-
  _gaq.push(['_trackPageview']);

  (function() {
    var ga = document.createElement('scr:
    ga.src = ('https:' == document.locat:
    var s = document.getElementsByTagName
  })();

</script>
```

❸ Additional Steps

Link your AdWords campaigns

Log in to your AdWords account and link to the Google Analytics account. Learn more

Common Questions

- How do I add tracking code to my website?
- How can I confirm that I've entered the tracking code correctly on my pages?
- How long does it take to see report data after adding the tracking code?

note these options

Figure 16: Google Analytics tracking code and instructions

keywords are worth buying and how effective they are in driving traffic and sales.

The 'default' option in step 1, 'What are you tracking?' is a single domain (in this instance, leehopkins.net). Equally, I could choose to track a domain with multiple subdomains, such as www.leehopkins.net, apps.leehopkins.net, and store.leehopkins.net. Or I could choose to track multiple top-level domains, such as leehopkins.net, leehopkins.com and leehopkins.name, which I might if I wanted to track visitors as they move to and fro across my various web properties.

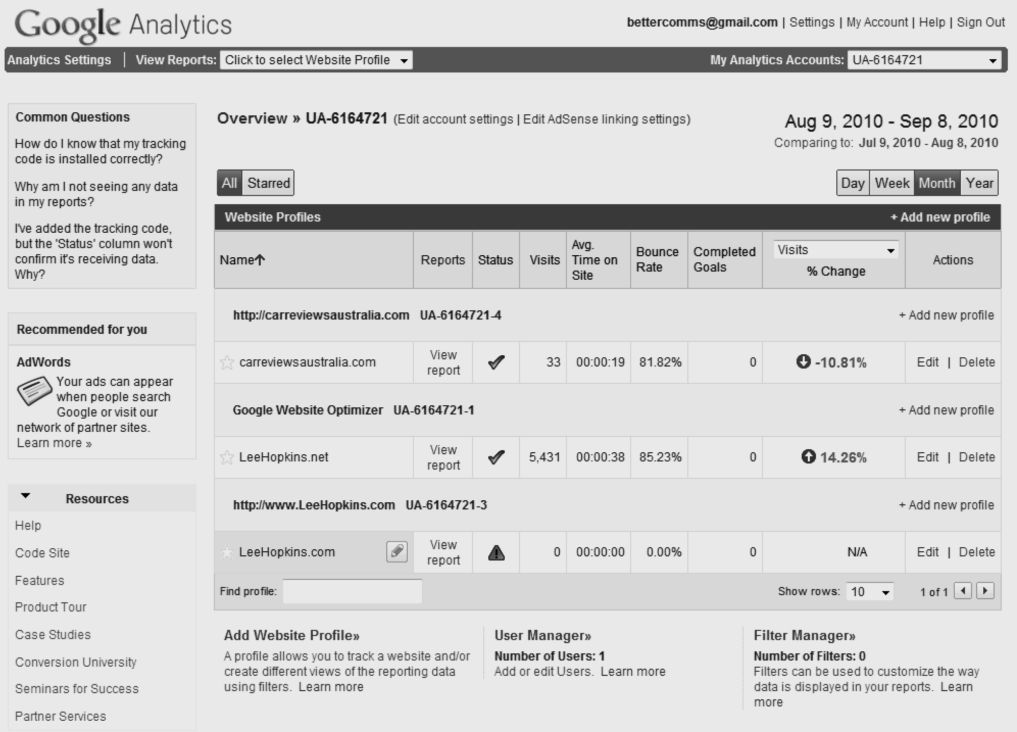
Again on this page, as with every page in Google Analytics, there are helpful Common Questions such as 'How do I add tracking code to my website?', 'How can I confirm that I've entered the tracking code correctly on my pages?' and 'How long does it take to see report data after adding the tracking code?' (Around 24 hours is the answer to the last question).

Once your code is set up

Around 24 hours after your code is inserted into your site, Google will start showing some results. Obviously, the longer the time period of data capture, the richer the amount of information that can be gleaned from it. Let's look at how Google Analytics can display some of the information that it captures.

For the following screen shot I'm going to change my Google Analytics account, using my 'bettercomms@gmail.com' login name, because I am already tracking some of my sites using it.

Figure 17 illustrates that I have registered three sites with Google Analytics: carreviewsaustralia.com (a long-neglected car review site), my blog at LeeHopkins.net and my more traditional website at LeeHopkins.com.


Google Analytics
bettercomms@gmail.com | Settings | My Account | Help | Sign Out
Analytics Settings | View Reports: Click to select Website Profile
My Analytics Accounts: UA-6164721
All Starred
Day Week Month Year
Recommended for you
Resources
Help
Code Site
Features
Product Tour
Case Studies
Conversion University
Seminars for Success
Partner Services

Common Questions

How do I know that my tracking code is installed correctly?

Why am I not seeing any data in my reports?

I've added the tracking code, but the 'Status' column won't confirm it's receiving data. Why?

AdWords

Your ads can appear when people search Google or visit our network of partner sites. Learn more »

Overview » UA-6164721 (Edit account settings | Edit AdSense linking settings)

Aug 9, 2010 - Sep 8, 2010

Comparing to: **Jul 9, 2010 - Aug 8, 2010**

Website Profiles + Add new profile

Name↑	Reports	Status	Visits	Avg. Time on Site	Bounce Rate	Completed Goals	Visits % Change	Actions
http://carreviewsaustralia.com UA-6164721-4								+ Add new profile
☆ carreviewsaustralia.com	View report	✓	33	00:00:19	81.82%	0	⬇ -10.81%	Edit | Delete
Google Website Optimizer UA-6164721-1								+ Add new profile
☆ LeeHopkins.net	View report	✓	5,431	00:00:38	85.23%	0	⬆ 14.26%	Edit | Delete
http://www.LeeHopkins.com UA-6164721-3								+ Add new profile
☆ LeeHopkins.com	View report	⚠	0	00:00:00	0.00%	0	N/A	Edit | Delete

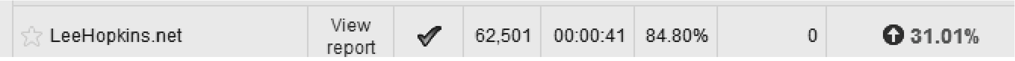
Find profile: Show rows: 10 1 of 1

Add Website Profile»
A profile allows you to track a website and/or create different views of the reporting data using filters. Learn more

User Manager»
Number of Users: 1
Add or edit Users. Learn more

Filter Manager»
Number of Filters: 0
Filters can be used to customize the way data is displayed in your reports. Learn more

Figure 17: Overview of several sites in Google Analytics



☆ LeeHopkins.net	View report	✓	62,501	00:00:41	84.80%	0	⬆ 31.01%

Figure 18: Traffic for LeeHopkins.net, reported annually

The first two sites; the car reviews and my blog both have ticks under the ‘Status’ column, whereas there is a warning triangle for my traditional website.

This is because at the time of writing this chapter I had yet to add the code to the site; a mistake I immediately rectified!

Even from this ‘Overview’ page I can see some worrying data that needs to be investigated: there is a very high ‘bounce rate’ on both my car reviews and blog sites. This means that visitors to those sites are highly likely to immediately leave as soon as they get there, not staying around to read any content other than that first presented to them.

On the Overview page one can also see that visitors aren’t staying around for very long; 19 seconds on the car review site and 38 seconds on the blog site. Without this information I could be taking a HiPPO’s view of my sites and thinking they are doing ok. A HiPPO is the ‘Highest Paid Person’s Opinion’ – they are my sites, I designed them, I’m proud of them and so naturally I think they are going well.

Thankfully sites like Google Analytics are able to show me not only that my sites need improvement, but also where they need to improve, as we shall see.

I can at least take some small comfort that the traffic visiting my blog has increased over 14 per cent from the previous month. If we look at that on an annual basis (Figure 18), by clicking on the ‘Year’ button, top right of the screen, we can see that I’m up nearly a third on the previous year’s traffic.

Let’s delve deeper into what Google Analytics can show me about my blog.

The Dashboard defaults back to a monthly report and tracks on a daily basis how many visitors have come to my site (a total of 1,686 in fact). Of those 1,686 people who visited my site, over two thirds are repeat visitors (31.05 per cent are new to the site this month), which is encouraging: it means that people *are* coming back to read more, even if they only stay for 39 seconds and read an average of one and a quarter pages per visit (1.26 pages/visit).

I can also see that most of my audience are located in the US and Australia and that 73 per cent of the traffic that comes to my site comes via search engines.

Additionally, I note that my most popular article after the home page is an article written in 2006 called, ‘What is internal communication?’

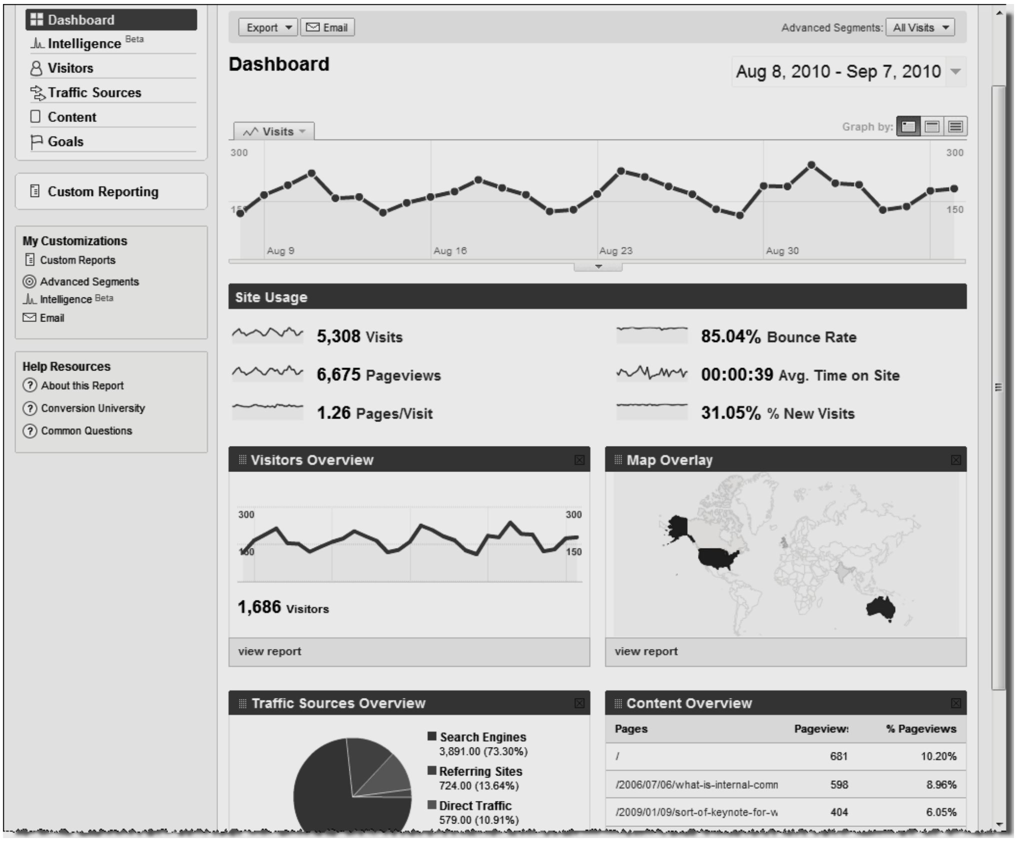
All of that information is available just from the Dashboard; as you can see from the links on the top left of the screen, you can delve deeper into the data and see, for example, what effect a particular article or post had on the average length of stay, how many people visit my blog on their mobile phone and from what countries/regions, and so on.

I can also create custom reports that filter and pull out segments of data; useful for particular market segment managers, for example, who don’t need or want to see the entire big picture.

You can also create ‘Goals’ to aim for such as increasing the number of visitors per month to 2,000 or reducing the bounce rate to 75 per cent. We all know the effect that having clear, specific and measurable goals can have on performance.

Statcounter.com

If you don’t fancy going to the effort and time investment of Google Analytics, there are plenty of other powerful and free tools around.


Dashboard
Intelligence Beta
Visitors
Traffic Sources
Content
Goals
Custom Reporting
My Customizations
Custom Reports
Advanced Segments
Intelligence Beta
Email
Help Resources
About this Report
Conversion University
Common Questions
Export
Email
Advanced Segments: All Visits
Dashboard
Aug 8, 2010 - Sep 7, 2010
Visits
Graph by:
300
150
Aug 9
Aug 16
Aug 23
Aug 30
Site Usage
Visitors Overview
Map Overlay
view report
Traffic Sources Overview
Content Overview

Site Usage

5,308 Visits
6,675 Pageviews
1.26 Pages/Visit
85.04% Bounce Rate
00:00:39 Avg. Time on Site
31.05% % New Visits

Visitors Overview: 1,686 Visitors

Traffic Sources Overview

Search Engines 3,891.00 (73.30%)
Referring Sites 724.00 (13.64%)
Direct Traffic 579.00 (10.91%)

Content Overview

Pages	Pageview:	% Pageviews
/	681	10.20%
/2006/07/06/what-is-internal-comn	598	8.96%
/2009/01/09/sort-of-keynote-for-w	404	6.05%

Figure 19: Google Analytics Dashboard

One of my favourites is statcounter.com. As with Google Analytics, you need to insert some code into your site's pages, but unlike Google Analytics, the data captured is a lot simpler to deal with.

Statcounter.com is great for low-level data such as how many new and repeat visitors, what search terms they used to find you and what other sites they came from (which is helpful if you wish to see if the advert you placed on XYZ.com is working).

Avinash Kaushik

To get the most from your analytics investigations can I recommend you purchase a copy of *Web Analytics 2.0* by much-lauded analytics guru Avinash Kaushik.[2] It really is a superb work and it's accompanying cd-rom has some superb videos and resources that will quickly help you appreciate the power of structured data, allowing you to make tactical and even strategic decisions based on real data, instead of what the HiPPO thinks.

Avinash runs a superb blog on analytics over at Occam's Razor: http://kaushik.net/avinash

Analysing off-site interactions

Of course, all of the above is well and good, but tools like Google Analytics and StatCounter only capture browsers visiting your web properties; in the Web 2.0 world you don't have to go to a website to read the latest article published on it. RSS readers such as Google Reader, FeedDemon, and NetNewsWire, among many others, enable you to visit the one site or application on your computer desktop and have the latest articles from a multitude of sites come to you (as many sites, in fact as you are comfortable in subscribing to via clicking on the widely-used and usually orange RSS icon).

Because on-site analytics engines don't capture off-site interactions, we need a different, additional set of tools.

Feedburner.com (owned by Google) allows you to track how many people subscribe to your site's RSS feed.

Feedburner captures the interactions with your readers that occur away from the way you traditionally think online interactions with your content occur.

Technology evolution in online publishing has made it really easy to not only publish regular updates to web-based content, but also keep track of a large number of your favourite websites or blogs, without having to remember to check each site manually or clutter your e-mail inbox. You can now streamline your online experience by subscribing to specific content feeds and aggregating this information in one place to be read when you're ready:

- Consumer bottom line – Subscribing to feeds makes it possible to review a large amount of online content in a very short time;
- Publisher bottom line – Feeds permit instant distribution of content and the ability to make it subscribable; and
- Advertiser bottom line – Advertising in feeds overcomes many of the shortcomings that traditional marketing channels encounter including spam filters, delayed distribution, search engine rankings and general inbox noise.

Most of the biggest names on the web offer content feeds including USATODAY.com, BBC News Headlines, ABCNews, CNET, Yahoo!, Amazon.com (including a podcast!) and many more. Google publishes feeds as part of many of its services; for example, you can get a feed of new items for any search you

RSS from the Wikipedia site: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rss

RSS (most commonly expanded as really simple syndication) is a family of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated works such as blog entries, news headlines, audio, and video in a standardized format.

An RSS document (which is called a feed, web feed, or channel) includes full or summarized text, plus metadata such as publishing dates and authorship.

Web feeds benefit publishers by letting them syndicate content automatically. They benefit readers who want to subscribe to timely updates from favoured websites or to aggregate feeds from many sites into one place. RSS feeds can be read using software called an RSS reader, feed reader, or aggregator, which can be web-based, desktop-based, or mobile-device-based.

A standardized XML file format allows the information to be published once and viewed by many different programs. The user subscribes to a feed by entering into the reader the feed's URI or by clicking an RSS icon in a web browser that initiates the subscription process. The RSS reader checks the user's subscribed feeds regularly for new work, downloads any updates that it finds, and provides a user interface to monitor and read the feeds.

make in Google News. In addition, hundreds of thousands of bloggers, podcasters and videobloggers publish feeds to keep themselves better connected to their readers, listeners, admirers; and critics. Apple, through its iTunes Music Store, offers tens of thousands of audio and video podcasts for download, each of which is powered by a feed.

Unfortunately, FeedBurner cannot generate feeds for websites that do not currently produce them. Virtually all blogs created by systems like Blogger, Wordpress and TypePad create their own standard feeds which FeedBurner can locate and then use to create a FeedBurner feed.

If you want to try to 'autogenerate' a feed from your existing website's content, you may need to use an application like FeedForAll.com. Alternatively, you may consider creating a blog using Blogger, Wordpress or another publishing service and then use the automatically-created feed that is associated with your new blog with FeedBurner. Any content updates you publish in this new blog will automatically end up in your FeedBurner feed and it may be easier to use this new site to publish updates than to try to redesign an existing site to accommodate feeds.

Costs

One of the (many) nice features of social media is the lack of upfront cost involved with most of the technologies. You can, as examples, set up a free blog, a free wiki, a free video channel; and free monitoring of your activities and achievements.

The only cost involved is the time required to:

- Determine your social media strategy (see Chapter 2);
- Determine who will manage your social media initiatives (see Chapter 5); and
- Actually get the work done (see Chapter 6).

But the costs of the time and labour involved certainly need to be factored into any decision made to undertake a social media initiative.

Additionally, because of the on-going, conversational nature of the social web, sufficient resource needs to be put aside for ongoing monitoring, maintenance, content publication and conversation.

At a minimum, any organisation dipping its toes tentatively into the social media conversation pool should look at one full-time staff member and one part-time to cover for holidays, sickness and so on. Plus, a manager needs to be trained in what these social media-focused employees are doing with their time; they actually *need* to 'play around' on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other sites in order to understand the nature of the beast and to add value to the organisation!

Let's break down the costs in more detail, looking specifically at:

- Setup/startup costs;
- Integration/maintenance costs; and
- Training and staff development costs.

Setup/startup costs

As discussed above, setup costs are minimal to zero. Most of the conversational elements of the web (blogs, podcasts, video, Twitter, Facebook, *inter alia*) are free to set up and free to maintain.

The areas that will involve costs are those where new channels such as blogs or forums, need to be incorporated into the organisation's main website, if deemed appropriate and web designers need to design the 'look n feel' of the new channels to match the existing company's website 'furniture'.

Staff from the IT department may need to incorporate no-cost RSS feed technology onto the company's servers if the power of RSS is going to be used either externally or behind the firewall. If however, the new channels are going to be hosted on third-party hosting platforms it is a safe bet that RSS technology will already be implemented. Liaison with the hosting company's support staff is usually free and many hosting services have pre-written 'how to' guides for setting up blogs, wikis and forums.

Content creation is also free (apart from a labour cost). It does not take an expensive team to put together a compelling video, for example. A simple camcorder and free software (Windows Movie Maker or Apple's iMovie as prime examples) are powerful enough to create great employee interviews, product demonstrations and VoC testimonials. Simple, retail-level camcorders are often used and one-button camcorders such as Cisco's Flip Mino and Kodak's Zi8 have become firm favourites at US conferences in particular.

Video hosting can also be free. The major video sites (YouTube.com, DailyMotion.com and Vimeo.com being the top three) are free to host at. Google also offers a paid hosting platform for content [google.com/apps/intl/en/business/video.html] which, for example, is only suitable for viewing behind the firewall, or by pre-authorised individuals (one possible use would be pre-release product information made available to select journalists/bloggers).

Great articles can be written and published on blogs using free content management software such as Windows Live Writer. Indeed, content doesn't just have to be tied to the desk or laptop. Applications exist (many of them free) to enable posts to be written on a smart phone or an iPad and then uploaded to the blog for publication, including with images.

Podcasts can be easily and quickly created by using a low-cost headset microphone and a laptop/desktop, by using a smart phone, or an iPad or a low-cost digital recorder. Editing

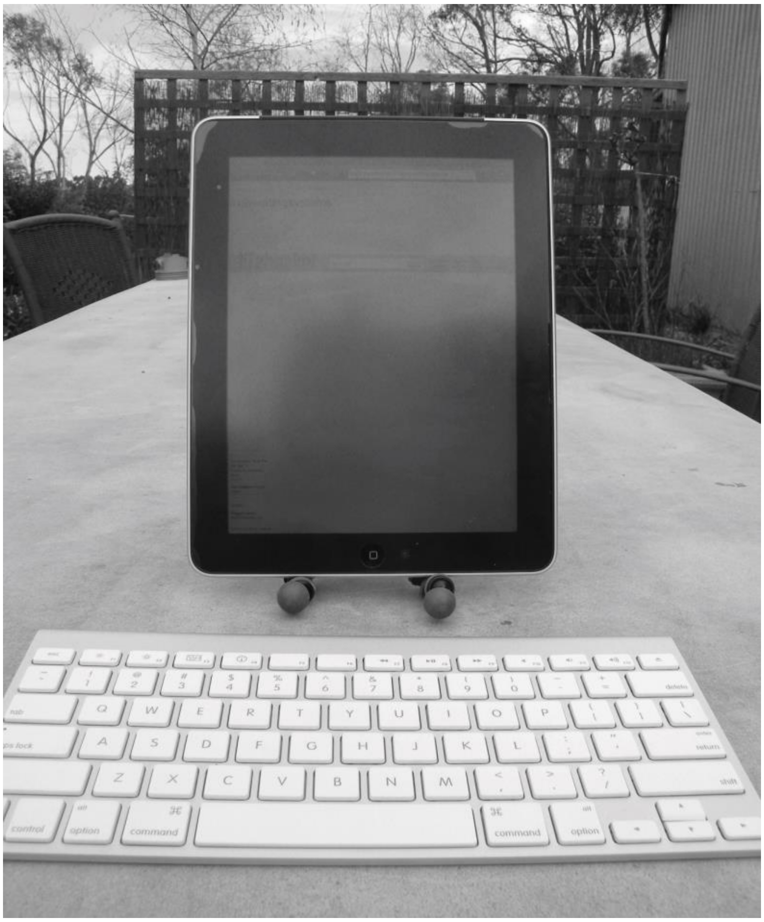


Figure 20: The author's café-friendly blogging hardware – iPad, Bluetooth keyboard and 'Gorilla' flexible tripod

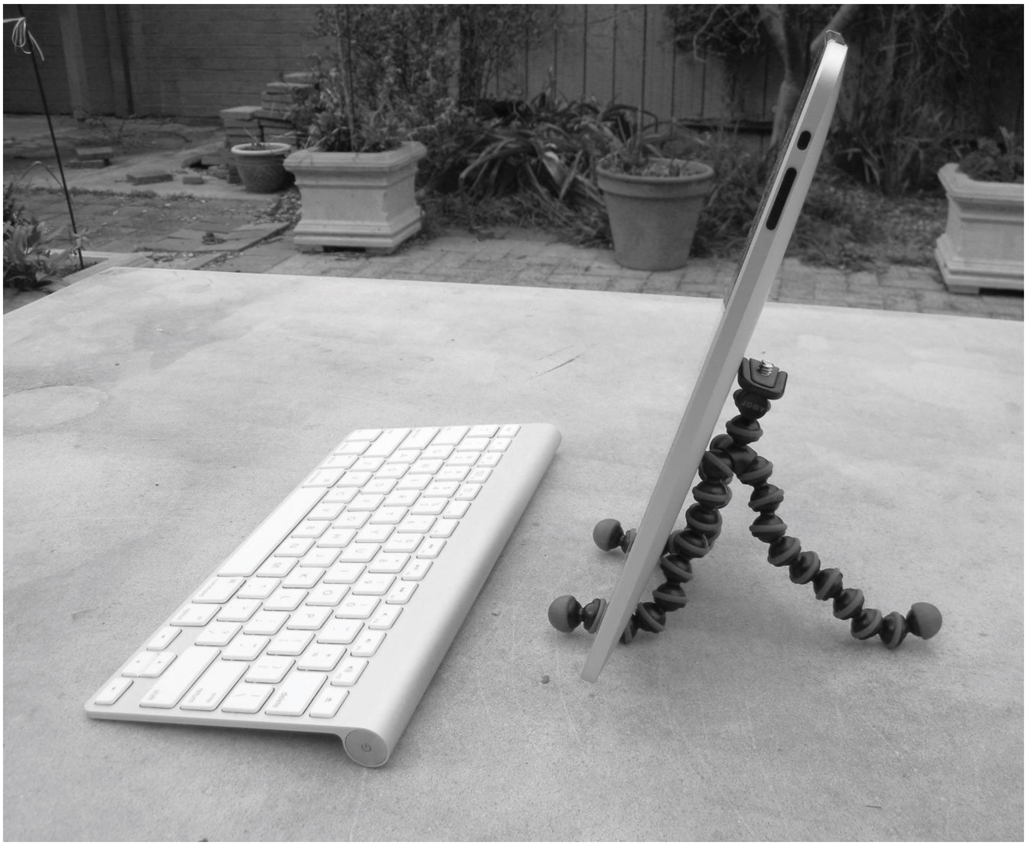


Figure 21: Side view of café-friendly blogging setup

the audio file and adding in special effects and music can be accomplished on the desktop or laptop with free audio editing tools like Audacity. It takes about as long to learn how to edit a sound file in Audacity as it does to learn how to cut, copy and paste in Word.

Every day sees new applications created for smart phones like the iPhone and tablets like the iPad; no doubt between the time of writing this chapter and it being published applications have been made available to edit sound files, including adding in sound effects and music, on these hardware platforms too.

Integration/maintenance costs

Integrating Web 2.0 tools into existing platforms need not be an expensive exercise, nor need it take a long time.

Social media tools such as blogs, forums, wikis, video and so on can be hosted on servers different from the organisation's main website or server farm, but as discussed above, the look and feel can mimic the traditional internet or intranet site. Even the URL seen in the address bar at the top of the browser can be a part of the organisation's online portfolio (for example, blog.xyz.com), despite the actual server hosting the blog being physically located somewhere else in the world. It would take a competent web-skilled IT person around one to two hours to configure such things.

The costs to integrate come down to the time required to design and code the Web 2.0 property to mimic the traditional internet/intranet site; and then upload any pre-existing digital content to the new online properties. Updating the software of whatever new online 'social' properties an organisation has will require probably one hour per month.

From thereon in, the costs become larger. An organisation of 250 or more staff will typically require at least one full- timer to maintain the content creation and conversational aspects of the organisation's participation in the social web.

Training and staff development costs

A significant element to the successful implementation of any new technology into an organisation is training of the key staff members who are going to be on the front lines of using it.

It may well be that your organisation chooses to let hand-picked evangelists be the first to use new social tools in your organisation (a very sound strategy). Therefore, they may need very little in the way of training in order to successfully use these tools.

However, there may also be employees who are keen to use these new social tools even though they have little or no training in them. An example of this might be an employee who has heard from peers about Twitter and wants to try it out.

Even among the evangelists, different people will have different levels of experience with the various tools. Some may be experienced bloggers but have no experience with video or only little with audio and so on. Some may be experienced members of the Twitterati but have little or no experience in managing a Facebook page. Training, for all of them, will at some stage figure in an organisation's roll-out plans.

The costs involved in this training can be small or significant, depending on how quickly the organisation wants its staff 'up to speed' on these new tools.

Without doubt, a day spent locked away with a trainer and some pre-prepared support material for them to take away as back-up resources is the best way forward. This naturally comes at a cost: the cost of the trainer, the cost of the development of the back-up resources and the cost of the employee(s) being away from their desk for a half-day or full-day (depending on how much training is being given. Expect two tools to take half a day and three or more tools to take a full day. This is for familiarisation and basics only; expect a full day per module for advanced, mastery-level training).

Once the evangelists and/or front line employees have been trained, they can act as local area support members and culture change agents, particularly if the organisation is looking to introduce these social tools and the culture change they will present across the entire company (see Chapter 4).

However, it is always useful to keep a trainer either on-staff or as an as-required contractor (depending on the size of the organisation), particularly if the organisation is looking to roll-out these tools for organisation-wide adoption and use. The evangelists will no doubt perform admirably as 'local area' resources, but a centralised training capacity will enable consistency of information and training delivery, as well as be able to ensure that employees undergo training in and appreciation of the organisation's social media policy (see Chapter 3).

Return on investment (ROI)

If there is one contentious area of social media, it is where it meets understandable organisational requirements for measurement and analysis of its return.

Equally, there are very strong arguments on why the traditional metrics of marketing are no longer appropriate when considering social media channels,which means traditional concepts of ROI should be jettisoned. I can feel the shudders of micro-managed evangelists from here.

So let's look at the arguments 'against' and 'for' the concept of an ROI.

Against an ROI

There is a very strong argument made in some communication and business circles that the whole idea of measuring conversations is antithetical to the new communication landscape that is social media.

Organisations, the argument goes, are no longer in charge of the message; instead, the message is now in the hands of the conversationalists and they are able to very rapidly create counter-messages to any the organisation might make. Not only that, but they can create those messages faster than the organisation is able to, see them travel further and watch them resonate and create a much greater response.

The outputs and resultant decisions that come from old school measurement and analysis no longer apply in this new age of consumer-created content. Consumers can change their mind online in a moment; leaving old-school data analysis about as fresh as a school history book. History can no longer serve as a barometer of sentiment and likely consumer behaviour.

The most-asked question consultants in social media are asked is, 'What's the ROI?'

Many times I am barely able to suppress my response, 'I don't know. What's the ROI of your marketing brochure? What's the ROI of your CEO's golf days? What's the ROI of your human resources department? Or IT? Or legal? Customer service? Finance?'

No-one can tell you for sure what the ROI is of any department in a company is; any figure given is at best an educated guess. But would an organisation think of running without legal support? Or IT? Or customer service? Or HR? Or finance? Even if they outsourced those functions they would still need to have them.

So too with creating and maintaining conversations in the social space – even if they have to be outsourced (an idea which I strongly recommend you don't pursue), they still have to be part of the communication mix in this second decade of the 21st Century. Giving those conversations a 'plucked from the ether' statistical number may give some sense of safety and security to senior management. Paul Simon sang it best, "When numbers get serious, serious numbers are eager to please," but they have about as much predictive validity as psychological profiling through the analysis of a person's handwriting.

That is because members of the social space can very quickly move from one online property to another if they feel peeved to any great extent. Equally, they can swarm to an online property and knock out its servers by the sheer weight of their numbers.

They could swarm for at least three reasons:

- Because they wanted to register their disappointment in something the company has done;
- Because they wanted to register their delight in something the company has done (and probably buy something while they are there); or
- Because they deliberately wanted to knock the servers out and deny the organisation any avenue for conducting business or communicating online.

The social sphere can so quickly organise itself to swarm around an online property, the organisation owning the property isn't aware of it until it's happened and the damage (if that was the intent) has been done.

So any attempt to predict what people are going to do at some stage in the future is at best a 'wet finger in the air, attempting to tell where the breeze is blowing' affair.

And as we all know, people are notoriously likely to do whatever it is that you *don't* want them to do, the unpredictable rascals!

For an ROI

InvestorWords.com says that ROI is, "Return on investment. A measure of a corporation's profitability, equal to a fiscal year's income divided by common stock and preferred stock equity plus long-term debt. ROI measures how effectively the firm uses its capital to generate profit; the higher the ROI, the better."

Wikipedia says it more clearly: "ROI is a measure of investment profitability, not a measure of investment size. Return on investment is a percentage return based on capital invested."

Which to your average CFO, means that a profit needs to be generated by any social media initiatives and that profit, above the investment made, needs to be measurable and quantifiable.

Yet with the maturation of social media into a recognised channel of communication, measurement analytics have similarly matured.

For example, today a savvy marketing manager analysing a social media initiative can measure:

- Return on engagement (the duration of time spent either in conversation or interacting with social objects and in turn, what transpired that's worthy of measurement);
- Return on participation (the metric tied to measuring and valuing the time spent participating in social media through conversations or the creation of social objects);
- Return on involvement (similar to participation, marketers have explored touch-points for documenting states of interaction and tying metrics and the potential return of each);
- Return on attention (assessing the means to seize attention, hold it and as such measure the responses activities that can be engendered); and
- Return on trust (a variant on measuring customer loyalty and the likelihood for referrals. A trust barometer establishes the state of trust earned in social media engagement and the prospect of generating advocacy and how that impacts future business).

Take a look also at the social networking media ROI calculator at http://bit.ly/chnUtK.

One could even argue that the term ROI could be re-construed as 'return on influence'.

As detailed above, there are numerous ways of capturing social media data – the emphasis must always be on deciding from the outset *why* the data is being captured and measured and *what business goal* the social media initiative is aiming to support.

For example, if the business goal is to increase sales by ten per cent this fiscal year and social media is seen as one of the channels through which sales and marketing activity can occur, then it becomes important to track and measure sales initiatives and marketing pushes on this channel. This can be easily done by a co-operative web/IT team, a competent data analyst and, for example, Google Analytics. Specific pages on the website can be set up to which traffic is driven by social media initiatives, thus allowing tracking and ROI analysis.

As an example of an organisation using metrics to determine ROI, Dell measures the success of its IdeaStorm community both in terms of lower support costs and in the number of new ideas generated.

It is therefore easier than at first thought to determine what an ROI figure might look for an organisation. As measurement guru K.D. Paine spells out clearly in a post on her excellent blog,[3] there is a very simple checklist that management can follow in order to determine what the ROI analyst should be tracking.

As Pat LaPointe from Marketing Measurement Today[4] answered when asked how one should measure the value of all the social marketing things undertaken, like

Case study: Measurement programme checklist by K.D. Paine

Abridged by Lee Hopkins

Step one: What are your objectives?

1. What are your organisation's key goals this year?
2. What are your department's key goals this year?
3. What do you hope to accomplish with this project/initiative?
    a. Budget approval;
    b. Budget increase;
    c. Head count increase;
    d. More internal support;
    e. More external support;
    f. Justify myexistence;
    g. Get a raise; and/or
    h. Get promoted.

Step two: What audiences are you targeting?

List all of the different audiences, not just the 'usual suspects'. If you have doubt about which groups to include, ask the senior executives and marketing people.

Examples would include: media, prospects, customers, employees, governments, investors, thought leaders, NGOs…

How does a good relationship with your various target audiences benefit your organisation?

Does it, for example, increase sales? Increase attendances at functions/events? Increase donations? Increase employee loyalty? Decrease absenteeism? Decrease time to market?

Step three: Set priorities

Prioritise your audiences: you have 100 points to allocate across all of your audiences; who gets the most points?

Step four: Determine a benchmark

Compare your results to competitor(s) and peer companies, industry benchmarks, yourself over time, last year's results and last quarter's sales and/or web/commerce metrics.

Step five: Select the right measurement tool

If any of your objectives in Step One include awareness, attitude change, education or improvement in products or services, you will need to conduct an online audit via social media to determine the state of play and establish a benchmark.

If you are looking to measure sales and leads, track website traffic and consider referring sources (offline as well as online) and existing hurdles to conversion (such as a poor landing page or too-complex purchasing/shopping cart process).

If you are looking to measure influence then you might want to look at factoring in some of the following criteria:

- Tone of coverage;
- Share of voice compared to competition;
- Audience reached;
- Prominence and dominance of coverage;
- Key analysts quoted; and
- Key topics discussed.

These are just some of the elements to the checklist. I strongly recommend you visit K.D. Paine's website to read the entire checklist.

Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and so forth: "Why are you doing them in the first place? If you can't answer that, you're wasting your time and the company's money."

And as Brian Solis says in his excellent book, *Engage: The complete guide for brands and businesses to build, cultivate and measure success in the new web,*[5] "By defining what it is we need to grow, we can determine what is we need to measure, which dictates the social programs we employ and how we ultimately engage. In the end, the best thing to measure is the predefined activity you plan on capturing. Give them something to talk about. Give them a reason to connect. Monitor, document, and measure everything that happens as a result."

Ownership – Who owns social media in the organisation?

When things go well, everyone strives to own the jewel in the crown; similarly, when things go sour suddenly no one wants to be in charge.

So where should the responsibility for social media lie within the organisation?

There are very good arguments that it should rest with the PR department (after all, that is what they do best: manage public relations). Equally, there are good arguments that social media should be owned by IT because of the reliance on internet technology, access and infrastructure.

But there are also equally valid arguments that ownership should rest with HR (because of the policies around social media's use within the organisation), or sales (because the web can be a very effective sales channel and Twitter has proven itself a great sales vehicle; Dell has sold over US$3m of equipment through it and the CEO of online shoe retailer Zappos estimates the value of Twitter to his business to be millions).

Marketing, too, gets a look in, because the web is such a good marketing channel. Customer service, too, could be considered because the social web has proven itself adept at creating social networks around products and services that allow users to self-serve and co-create answers to problems that would normally tie up customer service staff.

The communications department should also, it could be argued, be seen to be the owners of social media initiatives – after all, the social web is a new communication sphere.

So, among all of the competing departments, where should ownership of social media initiatives lie?

I believe that ownership should belong to *all* of them. This can be achieved by forming a project committee/working group to oversee all social media activities so that every stakeholder group has input.

It can be overseen by a member of the senior management team and chaired by communications or public relations at the beginning, but all stakeholder groups must be represented and take turns at chairing the meetings.

Setting up social media within the organisation this way achieves several things:

- It ensures recognisable senior level (the C-suite) buy-in and approval;
- It allows communications/PR to do what they do best: manage relationships via communication strategies, tools and tactics;
- It allows all stakeholders to feel that their voice is heard and appreciated;
- It shoulders responsibility for failure on all parties present thus ensuring that project derailment due to inter-departmental or inter-personal politics is minimised;
- Any recalcitrant or obstinate representatives could be brought back on board by the senior level manager (either directly or via the representative’s manager).

Ultimately, the success or failure of social media initiatives should not rest on the shoulders of one person, or even one small group, because every facet of the organisation is or can be touched by social media. Therefore it makes sense that every facet of the organisation aid in the guidance and steering of social media, lest social anarchy prevail.

Therefore, the stakeholder groups that must be represented include, where applicable:

- Advertising;
- Communications;
- Community/public relations;
- Executive management (C-suite);
- Finance;
- HR;
- Investor relations;
- IT;
- Legal;
- Marketing;
- Product;
- Procurement;
- Research;
- Sales;
- Service;
- Social media evangelists (you will need their contagious energy and enthusiasm); and
- Web development/maintenance.

This working committee/group, or board of advisors if you want to give it a posh title, *must* have both the responsibility *and* the authority to advise and carry out its work as it and senior management deem fit. If sub-groups need forming, form them. If members reasonably need time out from their day-to-day responsibilities to meet the requirements of the working group, let them have it. Treat this group with the respect you would any other major project group – because their outcomes may well mean millions or billions to the bottom line of the organisation.

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Chapter 6: Social media tools

THE BASIC toolbox of social media tools is huge, expanding weekly and shows no sign of shrinking any time soon, with the following list of tools just the tip of the iceberg. More tools are in each category than are shown here and there are more categories than shown here, too:

- Blogs – WordPress, Blogger, Typepad, Moveable Type;
- Social networks – Facebook, MySpace, Hi5, Bebo;
- DIY and white-label networks – Ning, Cisco EOS, Jive;
- Microcommunities – Twitter, FriendFeed, Identi.ca, Plurk, Yammer, 12seconds, Seesmic, Twitpic;
- Business networking – LinkedIn, Plaxo;
- Video – YouTube, Metacafe, Vimeo, Blip.tv, DailyMotion;
- Social bookmarks – Delicious, Diigo, StumbleUpon;
- Comment and reputation – Disqus, BackType, Intense Debate; and
- Social CRM – Act!, Bantam, SalesForce, ToucanCRM.

…the list goes on and on.

So the question for organisations is 'Which tool(s) do we use?' As discussed in Chapter 2, the choice of tool is dependent on what the social media strategy is.

With all of the tools above and the hundreds more besides, is the toolbox just too bewildering to contemplate? Should organisations leave such tactical decisions to specialist consultants or the evangelists within the company walls?

I prefer to think that there are six main tools from which all things can be achieved. Those tools are:

- Blogs;
- Microblogs;
- Social networks;
- Podcasts;
- Videos; and
- Wikis.

We will now consider each in turn.

Blogs

There are over 200 million blogs currently being tracked by the various tracking engines (Google and Technorati.com in particular). Within that 200 million are all manner of subject matter; truly, you can find a blog about whatever it is you can think of. Nasal hair trimmers (http://bit.ly/c56gzW), belly button fluff (http://bit.ly/3HLeH2), and underwater basket weaving (http://bit.ly/aps2mt) are just some of the topics covered in the blogosphere.

But also found among the ephemera are some fabulous, well thought-through and cogent blogs on every business subject such as:

- Economics;
- Management;
- Marketing;
- PR;
- Sales;

- Innovation;
- R&D;
- Strategy;
- Government relations;
- Investor relations;
- Community relations;
- IT
- HR;
- Legal;
- Accounting; and
- Administration

...just to name a few.

To find them is simplicity itself. Merely go to Google and look in the top left hand corner for the more link. Click on the down-facing triangle next to it and a drop-down box will appear (see Figure 1). Click on Blogs.

Enter your search term (e.g. economics, management, manufacturing, strategy) and hit the 'Search blogs' button (see Figure 2).

Note also the 'Advanced Blog Search' option: as you can see from Figure 3, it offers a far more nuanced, granular search option.

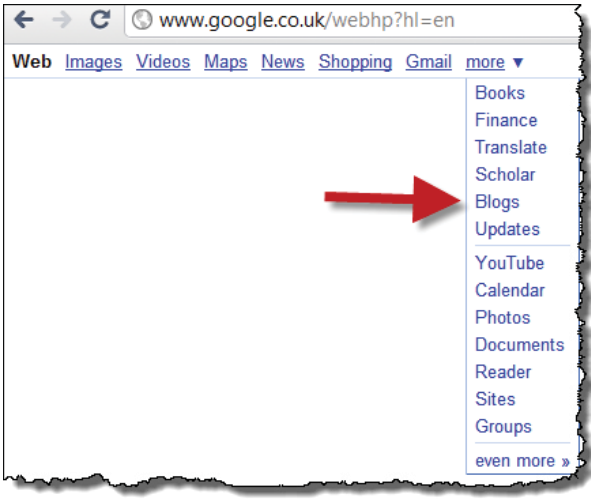

www.google.co.uk/webhp?hl=en
Web
Images
Videos
Maps
News
Shopping
Gmail
more ▼
Books
Finance
Translate
Scholar
Blogs
Updates
YouTube
Calendar
Photos
Documents
Reader
Sites
Groups
even more »

Figure 1: Finding 'Google Blogs' from the Google home page

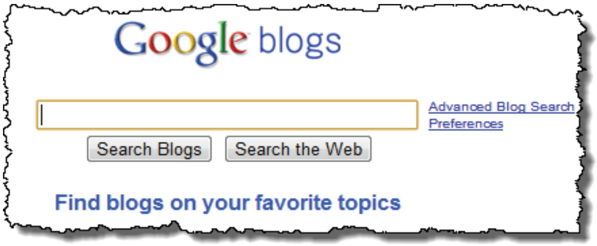

Google blogs
Advanced Blog Search
Preferences
Search Blogs
Search the Web
Find blogs on your favorite topics

Figure 2: Finding suitable blogs (from google.co.uk)

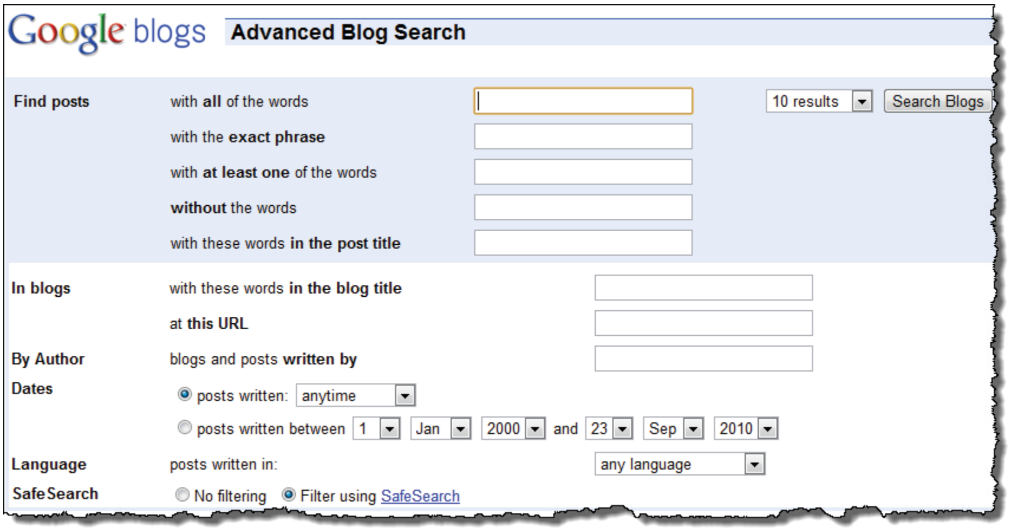

Google blogs
Advanced Blog Search
Find posts
with all of the words
with the exact phrase
with at least one of the words
without the words
with these words in the post title
10 results
Search Blogs
In blogs
with these words in the blog title
at this URL
By Author
blogs and posts written by
Dates
posts written: anytime
posts written between 1 Jan 2000 and 23 Sep 2010
Language
posts written in: any language
SafeSearch
No filtering
Filter using SafeSearch

Figure 3: The 'Advanced Blog Search' screen

All of which is a great asset for anyone interested in keeping up with thought leaders in their particular industry, but do organisations receive any benefit from running a blog themselves?

In July 2006 Dell launched Direct2Dell, the first of many Dell blogs that allowed it to engage directly with its detractors, supporters, the media and evangelists. At first it was only available in English. Today Direct2Dell exists in English, Spanish, Norwegian, Japanese and Chinese. These are not translations as each blog has its own audience and content.

As Michael Dell replied when asked what Dell had learned from blogging:[1]

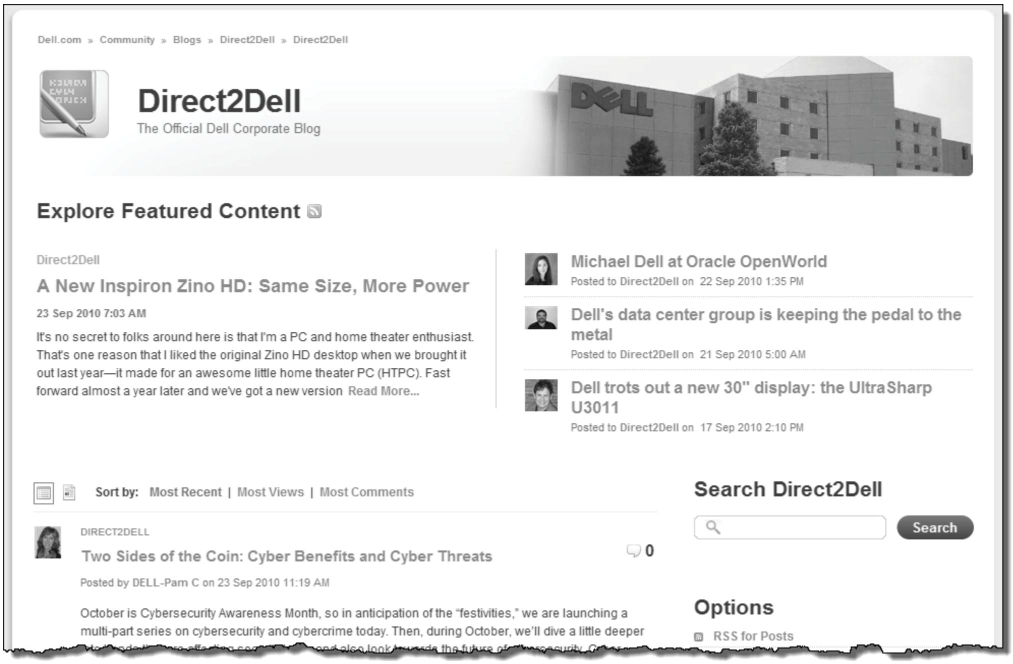
“Well, we were one of the first companies to have an online policy that insists on complete transparency by Dell employees. Our team members must always identify that they are from Dell when they speak online.

“I believe our teams like the opportunity to speak directly to our customers with video clips on Direct2Dell, when we introduce new products. You can see this is now the standard way we introduce new products. Our engineers didn’t always get a chance to speak in the past, but now it’s easy.

“When we have an issue, we act quickly and we use Direct2Dell as a central point for clarity. If you look at the battery recall, we shared continual updates on our progress.”

“I think a strong company is one that constantly learns. One of the best ways to constantly learn is to really listen to customers. The rapidly changing tech landscape makes it efficient and easier than ever before to listen, learn and connect with customers. The emergence of social media is a tremendous opportunity to bring the ‘outside’ into your company.

“IdeaStorm is another Dell blog, a site for customers and other people interested in submitting technology and business ideas


Dell.com » Community » Blogs » Direct2Dell » Direct2Dell
Direct2Dell
The Official Dell Corporate Blog
Explore Featured Content
Sort by: Most Recent | Most Views | Most Comments
Search Direct2Dell
Search
Options
RSS for Posts

Direct2Dell

A New Inspiron Zino HD: Same Size, More Power

23 Sep 2010 7:03 AM

It's no secret to folks around here is that I'm a PC and home theater enthusiast. That's one reason that I liked the original Zino HD desktop when we brought it out last year—it made for an awesome little home theater PC (HTPC). Fast forward almost a year later and we've got a new version Read More...

Michael Dell at Oracle OpenWorld
Posted to Direct2Dell on 22 Sep 2010 1:35 PM

Dell's data center group is keeping the pedal to the metal
Posted to Direct2Dell on 21 Sep 2010 5:00 AM

Dell trots out a new 30" display: the UltraSharp U3011
Posted to Direct2Dell on 17 Sep 2010 2:10 PM

DIRECT2DELL

Two Sides of the Coin: Cyber Benefits and Cyber Threats 0

Posted by DELL-Pam C on 23 Sep 2010 11:19 AM

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month, so in anticipation of the “festivities,” we are launching a multi-part series on cybersecurity and cybercrime today. Then, during October, we’ll dive a little deeper

Figure 4: The English-language Direct2Dell blog

for Dell. The community votes for their favorite ideas and demotes ideas they do not like. Depending on the number of votes received, ideas rise or fall in popularity. Dell then considers the highest rated ideas for product development/changes. Not only does the process reduce the costs of product development, it provides a larger focus group and, if a product does come to market, Dell has a built a group of customers who are likely to purchase or evangelise the product.“

On the topic of IdeaStorm, Michael had this to say, “Ideastorm is incredibly powerful. The Linux community showed how this tool can not only get attention, but lead to change. We brought back XP as an option for customers who wanted it. We reduced trialware and we get to listen to our customers discuss ideas in real time.

I can’t think of a better way for us to know what’s important. We can’t act on every idea nor should we, but the dialogue and debates are well worth it.”

Setting up a corporate blog

There are a couple of ways to set up the technical side of blogging. Some organisations run blogging platforms from their own servers, some use third-party hosting companies to host their blogs and then use domain redirection technology to ensure the blog ‘sits’ under the company’s domain.

An example of this would be the main domain being http://xyz.com and the blog being http://blog.xyz.com. Even though the two online properties (the main website and the blog) are hosted on different servers, perhaps on opposite sides of the earth, the branding is consistent for the visitor.

Should the CEO blog?

As discussed in Chapter 3, social media is built on four ethos, the three Ts and an A: truth, trust, transparency and accountability.

Therefore, ideally the CEO should only blog if it is actually the CEO writing the words.

This doesn’t have to mean the CEO types the words, though. When he was at General Motors (GM) Bob Lutz ran a very successful blog for GM and didn’t type the words himself; he had someone else do that for him. But he dictated his words so that the blog was in his ‘voice’, not in the voice of a corporate communicator charged with running his blog for him.

And the issue of voice is important, because for any social media initiative to come across as authentic, the person at the content creation/publication end (in this example, the blogger) needs to appear real and human, not a pedestal-sitting, management-speak-reciting automaton, which raises the question, “Is blogging right for me?”

The answer may take you a little while to find and is dependent on how much time and energy you put into it.

Many successful bloggers that I have spoken with about this have told me their secret: they set up another blog first and didn’t tell anyone about it. This allowed them to ‘play’ with the medium and see if it felt comfortable to them, to see if writing in a long-form manner was their best method of expression, or whether another medium like video or audio was better.

Not everyone is comfortable writing. Some people feel more comfortable saying what they have to say into a microphone or a camcorder, getting it over and done with then moving on. Microphones and camcorders allow for different parts of their personality and physical makeup to take precedence; perhaps that deep, resonant voice or the photogenic profile that has proven to generate approving responses.

But staying focused on blogging for the moment, creating a ‘secret’ blog under a pseudonym that allows one to practice is a great idea. Away from the eyes of the world, the author can test the waters, see if blogging is for them and develop their own personal style.

They may find, for example, that the humour that stumbles unsteadily from their mouth during the day flows fluently from the keyboard after the workday is done. Having more time to reflect, to choose their words, allows them to fine tune their thoughts.

Others find that the written word is not their most comfortable medium, which is great; at least they have discovered that by testing it for themselves and no harm has been done because no one knows the blog exists.

Where to go to set up a secret blog

The best two places to go to set up a secret blog are Blogger.com and Wordpress.com; both offer a very simple 'click through' sign-up process to get a blog set up and running.

Simply choose a 'theme' (a look and feel for the blog) and begin writing.

Should the entries (known as 'posts') be something that can move from the secret, personal blog to a newly set up corporate blog, simple cut-and-paste is all that is required.

Five golden rules for blogging

Whether the blog is for personal purposes or for corporate use, there are five golden rules to successful blogging:

- Kiss – Keep it simple, Simon: focus the blog on one topic, two at most, but those two must be complementary. Always make sure that the posts are written in a 'human' voice, not a voice redolent with management or marketing speak.
- Find your lovers – The blog is about a certain topic; search the blogosphere for others who blog on the same topic (the same lovers of the topic) and interact with them, principally by leaving useful, on-topic comments on their posts.
  You will find that they will more than likely visit your blog to see what you are writing about; if they like what they see they will possibly add you to their blogroll (a list of blogs they recommend others read), which is good for bringing you additional readers and for getting a better ranking in Google.
- Add the channel – Let the world know about the blog by including a link to it on all available existing channels: e-mail signatures, business cards, with compliments slips, letterheads, marketing literature and so on.
- Keep the conversation going – When someone takes the time and effort to leave a comment on a post, return the courtesy and thank the person. A simple 'thank you for your thoughts' is enough to show that you are listening and aren't just blasting out your thoughts in a one-way dialogue.
- Manage your risk – Ensure that you have a process in place to stop 'trolls' from leaving destructive comments (trolls are people who wander the internet and deliberately leave destructive comments, pick fights and generally behave badly, getting their satisfaction from the fuss they cause and attention they generate). Many individuals and organisations moderate their blogs so that comments are screened before being published. It is a wise idea to let your visitors know in advance that their comments are going to be moderated and that you reserve the right to edit or not publish comments if they, for example, are deliberately and grossly inflammatory or libellous (see the RSPCA box out).

For the RSPCA of South Australia I wrote a simple note that explained in clear language what was and was not acceptable for comments. Please feel free to take this and adjust it for your own blog.

Please note:

1. This is a family-friendly site. Whilst you take all legal responsibility for the comments that you make and indemnify the RSPCA of SA from any legal liability that may result from your comments, we reserve the right to edit or withdraw your comment should it contain defamatory content or inappropriate language.
2. If you are a first-time commenter your comments will be held in a moderation queue and not published. Once someone has had a chance to review your comment, and assuming that your comment meets the guidelines above, it will then be published. We don't sit by our computer and wait for someone to comment – we all are very busy, so it may be a little while before your comment is published.
3. Whilst you may use this site to further your own personal agendas, please be aware that should a comment stray 'off-topic' and away from the main thread of the article at the top of this page, your comment *may* be removed.
4. If your comment repeats previous comments (either by yourself or others) and adds nothing to the conversation it stands a good chance of being deleted.

Should negative comments be deleted?

One of managements' biggest fears is losing control of the tone of the conversation on a blog. The tone shifts from one the author wants to a negative tone when someone leaves a comment that is negative, relaying a disappointment in one of the company's products, services or processes.

Senior management have traditionally wanted any such comments to be deleted to avoid any issues or problems. But to do so is foolish. Here's why.

No one is perfect – no individual, no organisation. Everyone makes mistakes and the organisation that is not big enough to admit that it has made one in some way or at some time shows a very fragile ego.

The inhabitants of the social media landscape are very sceptical of individuals and organisations who are 'whiter than white'. The organisation or individual that can stick their hand up and claim *mea culpa* are more believable; and more trustworthy than the whiter than white. This trustworthiness is key to generating a relationship between the individual commenter and the individual or organisation that is blogging; the greater the relationship (in a positive sense), the greater the likelihood that the individual commenter will become an unpaid, willing evangelist for the company.

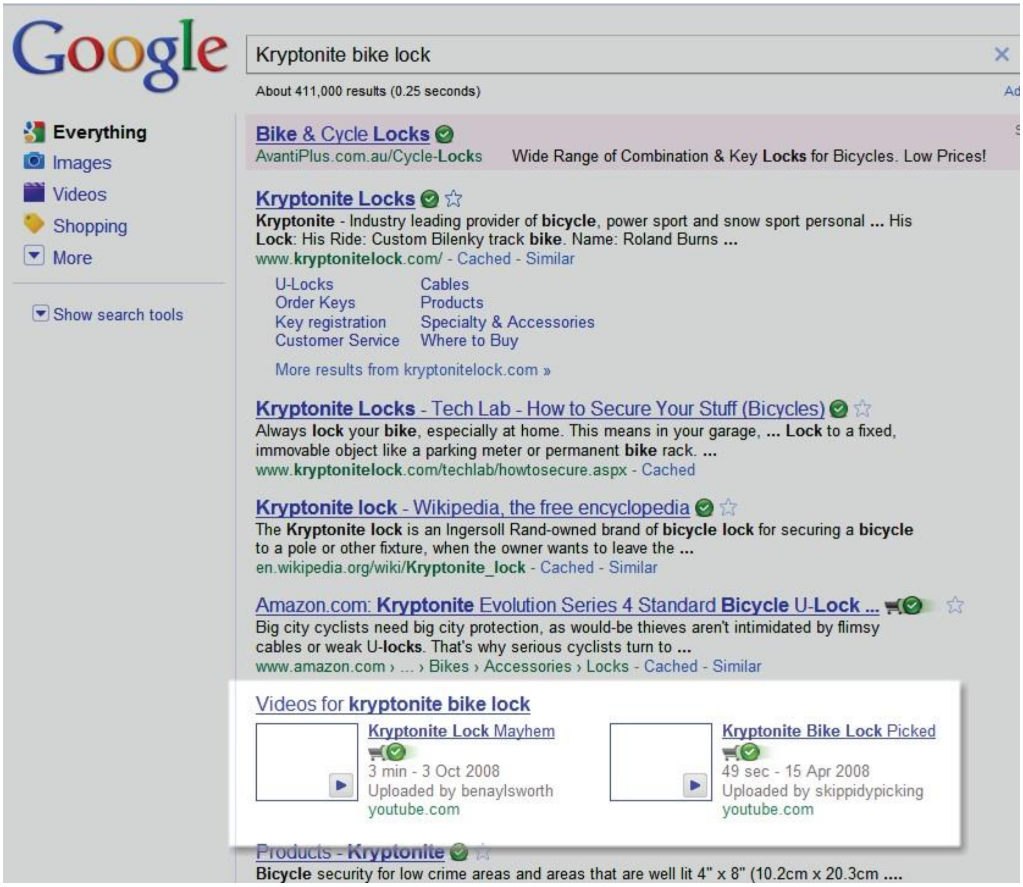
The individual or organisation that is willing to accept criticism when it is valid and do something about it gets 'brownie points' online.

Additionally, the individual or organisation that is able to take invalid criticism and complaints and show, in a calm and reasonable manner, that the criticism or complaint is unjust, that the facts as given by the commenter are incorrect, will generate tremendous goodwill within the social media sphere and is very likely to generate large numbers of both quiet supporters and out-and-out evangelists. There is a saying that has been around in sales circles for many years: the person with the most objections can often become the biggest evangelist if those objections are met and dealt with fairly.

There is one other reason why negative comments should not be deleted unless they fail to meet legal/ethical requirements: the person whose comment was deleted will very likely complain about it online, either on the same blog or via another medium (their own blog, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook and so on) and very quickly a storm can erupt where the company is inundated with negative comments about the company or individual deleting the comment. While storms don't usually last longer than a week in real time, the damage they can leave in Google can last a lot longer, as Kryptonite and BP can attest to.

Kryptonite

As an example, Kryptonite, the bike lock manufacturer, took a hammering in the blogosphere when a video was released showing how its unbreakable lock could be picked in next to no time with nothing more elaborate than a BIC biro. Years later, the damage is still visible on Google (see Figure 5).



Kryptonite bike lock

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Kryptonite Locks
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Kryptonite Locks - Tech Lab - How to Secure Your Stuff (Bicycles)
Always **lock** your **bike**, especially at home. This means in your garage, ... **Lock** to a fixed, immovable object like a parking meter or permanent **bike** rack. ...
www.**kryptonitelock**.com/techlab/howtosecure.aspx - Cached

Kryptonite lock - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
The **Kryptonite lock** is an Ingersoll Rand-owned brand of **bicycle lock** for securing a **bicycle** to a pole or other fixture, when the owner wants to leave the ...
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/**Kryptonite_lock** - Cached - Similar

Amazon.com: **Kryptonite** Evolution Series 4 Standard **Bicycle U-Lock** ...
Big city cyclists need big city protection, as would-be thieves aren't intimidated by flimsy cables or weak U-**locks**. That's why serious cyclists turn to ...
www.amazon.com › ... › Bikes › Accessories › Locks - Cached - Similar

Videos for **kryptonite bike lock**

Kryptonite Lock Mayhem
3 min - 3 Oct 2008
Uploaded by benaylsworth
youtube.com

Kryptonite Bike Lock Picked
49 sec - 15 Apr 2008
Uploaded by skippidypicking
youtube.com

Products - **Kryptonite**
Bicycle security for low crime areas and areas that are well lit 4" x 8" (10.2cm x 20.3cm ....

Figure 5: Google search results showing high rankings for videos on how to pick Kryptonite bike locks

Interview with Donna Tocci, Kryptonite communications manager, at the time of the video disaster and blog storm.

Lee: What have been some of the key lessons you've learned from your business communications experiences so far?

Donna: Relationships are key. Sounds simple, but some so-called communicators just don't get that. You cannot be a communications person without solid relationships. They take time to build, but they are the foundation of any successful communicator.

I think some people get stuck on the 'time to build' part. Who has time these days? They think that one e-mail exchange means they have a relationship with that person. It doesn't. Only through time does a relationship get built. It's the same in life outside work, too. :)

Follow-up is also very important. If you've told someone that you will get back to them with an answer – do it. Even if the answer isn't something they want to hear like, "I'm sorry but I just can't tell you that". Let's face it, even with this era of 'tell all' there are still things a company can not tell the public because it is either competitive information or future strategy or even, in some cases, a legal issue. It's better to just be up front and say "sorry...can't do it" than leave someone hanging.

Source: http://bit.ly/9ee28H

Case study: The Kryptonite BlogStorm – Another perspective

Kryptonite, Superman fans may recall, is the stuff that brings heroes down. A bike lock manufacturer of the same name had a hard, fast and expensive lesson on this over a ten-day period in September 2004.

It began at a group blog for bike enthusiasts where an anonymous blogger said he could pick the company's trusted u-shaped locks with a BIC pen. The story spread from point to point on the blogosphere. A day or so later, it hit Engadget, one of the most heavily trafficked of all blogsites, who posted a video showing how a BIC opened a Kryptonite lock.

The company remained mute for a full week, at which time they served up a tepid statement that their locks remained a deterrent, but the company was working on a better one to be released at a later unspecified date. The response expressed neither sympathy nor remedy for the hundreds of thousands of customers who had given the company money for a lock that was supposed to protect their property but did not.

Bloggers verbally assaulted Kryptonite, spread commentary and dispatched heavy traffic to the Engadget video. Engadget's owner, Jason Calacanis, estimated the video was seen by about 1.8 million visitors.

Ten days after the original incident, the company equivocated, announcing it would replace 100,000 BIC-pickable locks at a cost to them of US$10m.

Most observers agreed that had the company jumped in earlier, showing that they cared about the security of their customers, the story would not have spread so rapidly and the financial damage to them would not have been so great.

I think this is a proof point: of Waggener Edstrom's Frank Shaw's contention that the world has become a faster, smaller place because of blogs. A few years earlier than the Kryptonite crisis, a ten-day response would have been considered speedy for an enterprise. No longer.

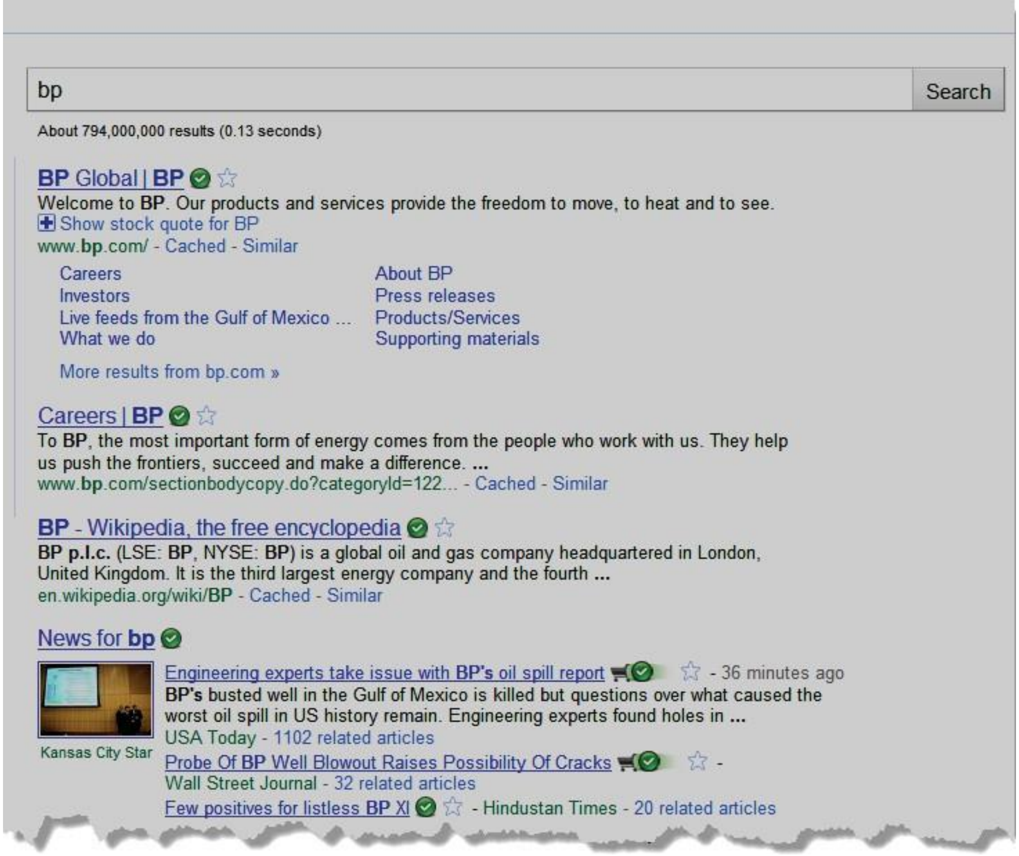
In January 2005, David Kirkpatrick and Daniel Roth in their article, ‘Why There’s No Escaping the Blog’ in *Fortune* magazine, led with the comment, “Freewheeling bloggers can boost your product – or destroy it. Either way, they’ve become a force business can’t afford to ignore.” Their lead evidence was the Kryptonite story. The bike lock company has become a prominent media example of how to do it wrong in the blogosphere. The company has since become open to discussing its tough lesson, but it was an expensive lesson on why companies need to be active in the blogosphere.

Donna Tocci from Kryptonite comments: “Saying that if we had a blog back in September may have helped our situation is probably a correct statement. Saying that we wouldn’t have been working 18-20 hours a day because we had a blog is not accurate. Communicating to our customers was only one piece, albeit an important piece, of the equation.”

Sources: http://bit.ly/9Yh3Jp, http://bit.ly/9dtyna. Reproduced with permission.

BP p.l.c

BP is another, more recent example. The Gulf of Mexico oil spill is still playing out in the social media world, with disparaging videos and blog posts still ranking highly (see Figure 6, which continues on page 68).



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News for **bp**

Kansas City Star

Engineering experts take issue with **BP's** oil spill report - 36 minutes ago

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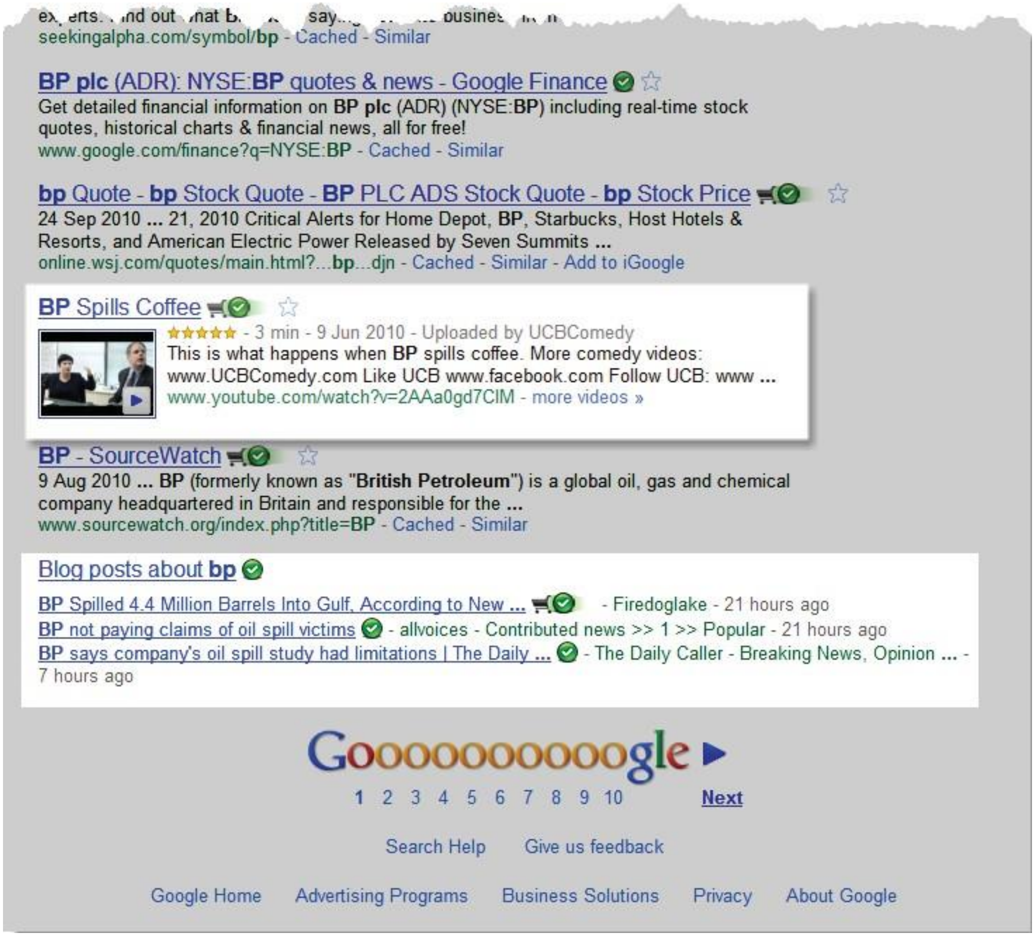
USA Today - 1102 related articles

Probe Of **BP** Well Blowout Raises Possibility Of Cracks -

Wall Street Journal - 32 related articles

Few positives for listless **BP** XI - Hindustan Times - 20 related articles



seekingalpha.com/symbol/**bp** - Cached - Similar

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Get detailed financial information on **BP plc** (ADR) (NYSE:**BP**) including real-time stock quotes, historical charts & financial news, all for free!

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24 Sep 2010 **...** 21, 2010 Critical Alerts for Home Depot, **BP**, Starbucks, Host Hotels & Resorts, and American Electric Power Released by Seven Summits **...**

online.wsj.com/quotes/main.html?...**bp**...djn - Cached - Similar - Add to iGoogle

BP Spills Coffee

★★★★★ - 3 min - 9 Jun 2010 - Uploaded by UCBComedy

This is what happens when **BP** spills coffee. More comedy videos: www.UCBComedy.com Like UCB www.facebook.com Follow UCB: www **...**

www.youtube.com/watch?v=2AAa0gd7CIM - more videos »

BP - SourceWatch

9 Aug 2010 **...** BP (formerly known as **"British Petroleum"**) is a global oil, gas and chemical company headquartered in Britain and responsible for the **...**

www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=**BP** - Cached - Similar

Blog posts about **bp**

BP Spilled 4.4 Million Barrels Into Gulf, According to New **...** - Firedoglake - 21 hours ago

BP not paying claims of oil spill victims - allvoices - Contributed news >> 1 >> Popular - 21 hours ago

BP says company's oil spill study had limitations | The Daily **...** - The Daily Caller - Breaking News, Opinion **...** - 7 hours ago

Figure 6: Satirical video of BP oil spill ranks high on a Google search of 'BP'

Twitter

If there is one social media channel that divides a nation, it's Twitter. Devotees of Twitter will tell you it is:

- A time-saver;
- Fun;
- An early warning radar;
- Revolutionary;
- A crowd sourcing tool;
- A fantastic instant information disseminator;
- A brilliant way of sharing news and commentary;
- Great for breaking news and shared experiences;
- A wondrous tool for mind reading, both individuals and groups; and
- A key business conversation channel.

Those who don't 'get' Twitter will tell you it's a narcissist's paradise, that it is full of egomaniacs who think you have nothing more to do than read about what they eat for dinner and that it's a complete waste of time that could be used far more productively. From these nay-sayers the question I get asked the most is, "Twitter… why would anyone *do* that?"

My first month's experience with Twitter was the same. I didn't see the value in it until I started developing online relationships with others. Once I did, the attributes listed above became obvious to me.

Now, when an event happens (like a recent small earthquake here in Adelaide, Australia), I don't rush to check the news, I rush to check Twitter.

A ten-step Twitter strategy

Key to deriving value from Twitter is having an approach that makes sense and that still fits in with common-sense communication principles:

Step one – Start first by listening

The biggest mistake I see companies make when they start out with Twitter is treating it as another channel to push information through. But Twitter generates the best value when viewed as a medium for holding *conversations* and building relationships, not making announcements. You may want to begin to build those relationships by keeping an eye on Twitter, search for questions you can answer and then carefully approaching the person who asked it.

Step two – Have clear goals

Think clearly about what type of difference you want to make in three months, six months or one year as a result of Twitter. Do you want, for example, to be able to better serve your customers, increase your customer base, connect with potential partners or increase online sales?

Step three – Only create one or two Twitter accounts

Enthusiasm counts for a lot in business, but the enthusiasm that creates a whole lot of Twitter accounts (for each different aspect of your organisation's business, for example), can taper and leave your company with a number of Twitter profiles that haven't been updated in a long time. Not a good look, trust me. Better to think through who actually needs one (and will continue to manage and maintain it) and start off one or two profiles/accounts at a time.

Step four – Integrate with your other channels

Twitter should be just part of your communication mix. Make sure that you coordinate Twitter, Facebook and other social media accounts so that you provide a consistent level of information. Additionally, make sure that your customer service people, for example, are aware that you are using Twitter as a customer service channel, or as a conduit to help customers connect with the organisation.

Step five – Start slow

Build the amount of time you devote to Twitter, don't just rush in and start tweeting like crazy. Twitter *can* be a productivity black hole if not managed properly, so monitor your activity over time. If you are generating value from Twitter, ramp up the amount of time you spend on it; if not, then treat Twitter as a low priority (but don't neglect it completely!) and focus your energies on other channels.

Step six – Decide who will tweet

Given a choice between the person who has all the knowledge and but doesn't like or 'get' twittering and a person who actively embraces the medium, choose the latter. They can always get the information from the former and answer the customer's question.

Step seven – Resist the temptation to pass the ball to your external PR agency

Twitter, even for a corporation, is an individual, person-to-person relationship. It will no doubt be tempting to let your PR agency handle your tweeting on your behalf, but the authenticity of dealing directly with someone from the company will be missing and it will start to show as conversations develop.

Step eight – Reveal the person behind the corporate Twitter account
Even though your Twitter account might be 'XYZCorp', make sure that the person actually running the account is identified. If it is a group of people, make sure that they are named. Optus Australia uses this strategy with their customer support Twitter account. At the beginning of every shift they adjust the 'Bio' field in their Twitter profile (under Settings > Account) to reflect who is running the account. Each time someone tweets, they also put their initials somewhere near the end (e.g. '^MP').

Step nine – Be conversational Remember point 1: Twitter is a conversational tool, not a one-way sales or PR blast channel. Therefore respond to customers and potential customers in a conversational tone; retweet your customers' tweets if there is value in what they have said. This way you will show yourself to really be a part of the Twitter community, plus it can help your customers get their questions answered by someone other than those who only follow them.

Step ten – Post mostly NOT about your organisation
Think of Twitter as a way of exchanging mutually useful and interesting information. Unless you are a mega brand with a legion of evangelists who are eager to read every utterance (which is rare), your followers are mostly looking to engage in conversation with you, share ideas, share insights and occasionally gossip. They want to see the human side of the company that is all too often hidden on the traditional corporate website.

So if you come across some interesting information (for example, an interesting factoid about something in the news) that would appeal to the people who follow your account, let them know about it. They may already be aware of the link, but you sharing it with them builds up 'brownie points' with them because it shows that you are willing to engage in conversation, not just blast out PR and sales messages.

Internal micro-messaging

Incidentally, if you are interested in using a Twitter-like service as an internal micro-messaging platform behind the firewall, two of the top providers are Yammer (yammer.com) and Presently (presentlyapp.com).

Five golden rules for Twitter

Much like the five golden rules for blogging there are five golden rules for Twitter.

- Kiss – Keep your tweets simple and clear to understand. Try not to use company jargon or marketing-speak but instead speak conversationally, using recognised abbreviations to save space (see box out).
- Find others to follow who share a passion for the subject you are tweeting about (be it a particular brand) or a thought leader in your industry.
- Add the channel to all of your literature, e-mail signatures, advertisements and so on.
- When others engage in conversation with you, take the time to thank them, help them with their enquiry (if that is why they contacted you) and add value to their experience of your company by

offering them useful information in return.

- Ensure that you don't fall foul of the Twittersphere by trying to use Twitter as a one-way sales or PR vehicle. Instead, engage with the residents of the Twittersphere as you would with your next door neighbour, with courtesy and respect. Also, ensure that all corporate Twitter accounts have a 'real life' person named in the 'Bio' section of the account profile, that way your organisation will become more human and less remote, distant and uncaring.

Twitter abbreviations

Anyone new to online communication, be it Twitter, forums, blogs or even good ol' IRC (yes, it's still around) will no doubt be annoyed that they don't know what some of the abbreviations they see in the conversations actually mean.

So here's a collection of some of the most-used abbreviations and what they stand for.

Technical Twitter abbreviations

MT	Modified tweet: This means the tweet you're looking at is a paraphrase of a tweet originally written by someone else
RT	Retweet: The tweet you're looking at was forwarded to you by another user
DM	Direct message: A direct-message is a message only you and the person who sent it can read. Important to you and someone to loyally follow someone all you need to type is *D username message*

Conversational abbreviations (Twitter or otherwise):

IMHO	In my humble opinion
OH	Overheard/other half
NFW	No f***ing way
IRL	In real life
NSFW	Not safe for work
FFS	For f***'s sake!
FWIW	For what it's worth
QOTD	Quote of the day
BTW	By the way
BFN	Bye for now
AFAIK	As far as I know
TY	Thank you
YW	You're welcome
FTW	For the win
WTF	What the f**k
HT	Hat tip (a way of thanking someone for pointing out a link or other resource to you)
AFK	Away from keyboard (similar to BRB)
BRB	Be right back (going to make a coffee, going to the loo, etc.)
ROFL	Rolling on floor laughing
ROFLMAO	Rolling on floor laughing my ass off
PEBKAC	Problem exists between keyboard and chair
DEU	Defective end user (common PC tech problem fixing stuff that should never need to be fixed)
ID Ten T (spoken)	reads ID10T
YMMV	Your mileage may vary (your opinion may be different from mine, and that's cool)

Bear in mind that you may also see these abbreviations used in lowercase.

Case study: General Motors' savvy social media marketing strategy

General Motors Holden's social media team, led by the uber smart Andrea Matthews, have been working hard with their marketing people to come up with some cracking promotional ideas recently.

First there was the launch of the Holden Barina Spark [http://bit.ly/agjmCt] via a 'design your own Barina Spark' [http://bit.ly/9gQyVE] contest.

Users can create their own unique designs for the Spark and share via Facebook and Twitter to encourage friends to vote for their car or get them to create their own. It also uses Facebook Connect so people can upload pictures from their albums to use within their own car design. Very clever. You can see my 'Mylor 05' Barina at http://bit.ly/anFiUN and vote for it.

Sadly, even though Holden are giving away weekly prizes that include an iPad, you can't view your car on an iPad because the site is designed in Flash; Apple HQ and Adobe, Flash's owners, don't play nicely together at the moment.

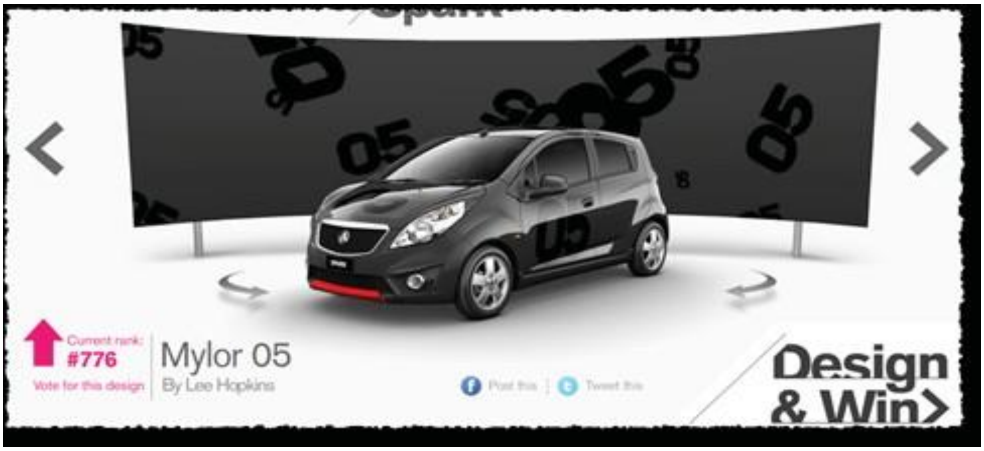
As if that wasn't enough to get the 'leetle grey cells' of Hercule Poirot fame working, Holden have just launched a neat game to let you know about their new range of Commodores.

Called the HoldenIQTest [HoldenIQ.com.au], it pits you against others from around Australia to see who has the highest 'smarts' (according to Holden). The 'test' comprises of a series of neat little games and puzzles; and having taken the overall test twice in order to improve my score, I can confirm that the English language tests were different both times.

As I write this, I'm ranked 27 out of 66 across the nation, with a score of 330. Ms Matthews scored 374 so I have a way to go before I'm offering a serious challenge to her. According to the test results in front of me, women are smarter than men (where have I heard that before) and the Australian Capital Territory is the smartest territory or state in Australia. Gen Y is the smartest generation, people with brown hair smarter than other hair shades, and the best drivers are those who prefer automatics rather than manuals.

Of course, you can invite your friends on Facebook to play and compare themselves to you, plus tweet that you've played the game (neither tell the world your score; that's up to you if you want to).

All in all, very clever campaigns that are very smoothly tying in Facebook and Twitter.



Social networking – Facebook

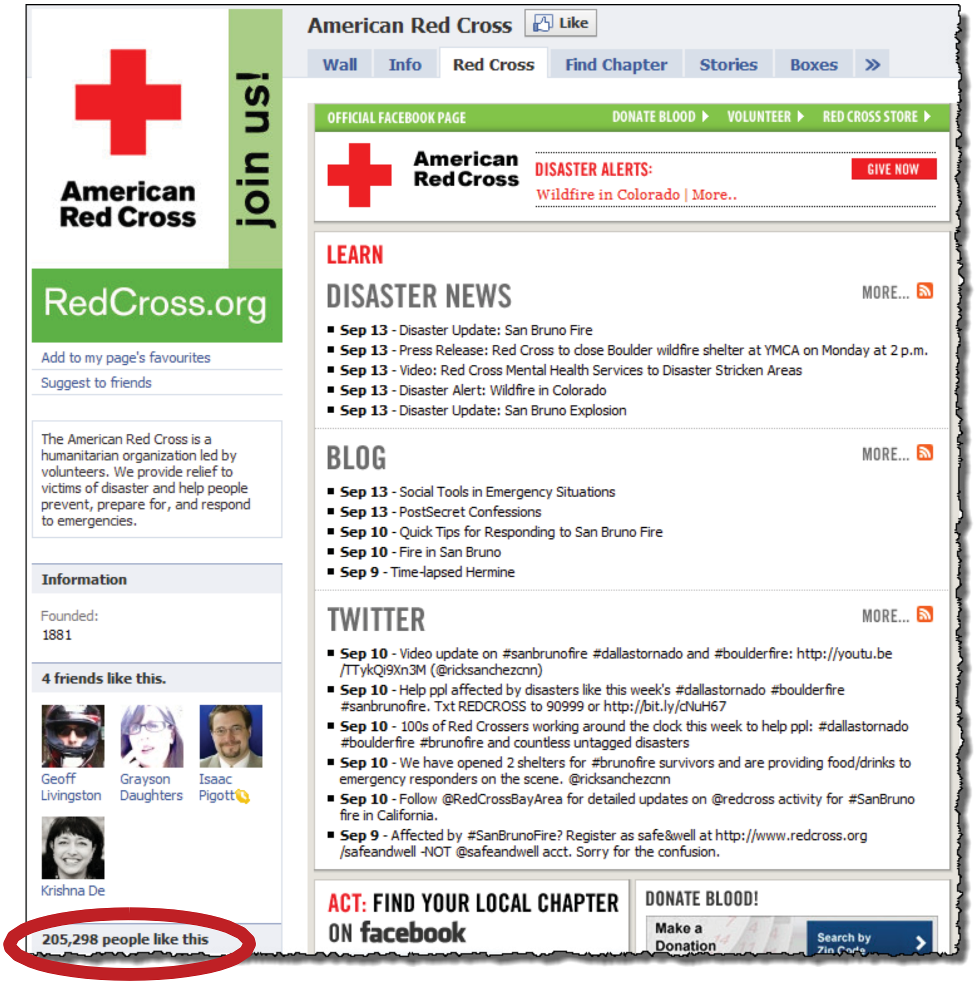
It's not the only player in town, but Facebook is a worldwide phenomenon and should be considered in every organisation's communication mix – even if setting up a stall on it is not right for every organisation. After all, it's hard to ignore a social network that if it were a country, would be the world's third largest.

To be successful on Facebook requires considerable time and effort to be made up front – making sure that the content that goes up on Facebook is content that the required audience will want to see.

Some organisations have been very successful on Facebook, others less so. The key difference comes down to how much time and effort organisations are willing to invest in adding new content. If new content is only added sporadically, then results will reflect that. If, however, content is added consistently over time (not just a whole lot of material uploaded once and then the micro-site left to grow weeds), better results will be forthcoming.

American Red Cross

The American Red Cross runs a very successful Facebook site (see Figure 7).



Add to my page's favourites

Suggest to friends

The American Red Cross is a humanitarian organization led by volunteers. We provide relief to victims of disaster and help people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies.

Information

Founded:
1881

4 friends like this.

Geoff Livingston
Grayson Daughters
Isaac Pigott
Krishna De

205,298 people like this

DISASTER ALERTS:
Wildfire in Colorado | More..

LEARN

DISASTER NEWS

- **Sep 13** - Disaster Update: San Bruno Fire
- **Sep 13** - Press Release: Red Cross to close Boulder wildfire shelter at YMCA on Monday at 2 p.m.
- **Sep 13** - Video: Red Cross Mental Health Services to Disaster Stricken Areas
- **Sep 13** - Disaster Alert: Wildfire in Colorado
- **Sep 13** - Disaster Update: San Bruno Explosion

BLOG

- **Sep 13** - Social Tools in Emergency Situations
- **Sep 13** - PostSecret Confessions
- **Sep 10** - Quick Tips for Responding to San Bruno Fire
- **Sep 10** - Fire in San Bruno
- **Sep 9** - Time-lapsed Hermine

TWITTER

- **Sep 10** - Video update on #sanbrunofire #dallastornado and #boulderfire: http://youtu.be/TTykQi9Xn3M (@ricksanchezcnn)
- **Sep 10** - Help ppl affected by disasters like this week's #dallastornado #boulderfire #sanbrunofire. Txt REDCROSS to 90999 or http://bit.ly/cNuH67
- **Sep 10** - 100s of Red Crossers working around the clock this week to help ppl: #dallastornado #boulderfire #brunofire and countless untagged disasters
- **Sep 10** - We have opened 2 shelters for #brunofire survivors and are providing food/drinks to emergency responders on the scene. @ricksanchezcnn
- **Sep 10** - Follow @RedCrossBayArea for detailed updates on @redcross activity for #SanBruno fire in California.
- **Sep 9** - Affected by #SanBrunoFire? Register as safe&well at http://www.redcross.org/safeandwell -NOT @safeandwell acct. Sorry for the confusion.

ACT: FIND YOUR LOCAL CHAPTER ON facebook

DONATE BLOOD!

Figure 7: The American Red Cross' Facebook page

Note their extensive use of up-to-date information and their clear delineation of information-types (Disaster News, Blog, Twitter, 'Give now' call-to-action).

But Facebook success doesn't have to rely just on frequent, relevant and timely updates; equally successful marketing and outreach programs can be run from within it.

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals achieved tremendous success with a Facebook campaign (see case study).

Case study: Making the case for change – How SPCA premium pet food created a facebook monster

The digital agency Young and Shand (youngshand.com) were asked to assist with the launch of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) premium pet food.

This brand is managed on behalf of the SPCA by Brand Support Ltd, the people behind Cancer Society sunscreen. The business is a case study in itself – a company dedicated to helping charities by developing products and paying them a license fee. They generate nearly a million New Zealand dollars a year for the Cancer Society and wanted to do the same thing for the SPCA.

Situation

Unlike the Cancer Society sunscreen, the SPCA pet food didn't sell itself. An assessment found that pet food is a more habitual, high involvement purchase, one where changing products can cause both pet and owner grief. So it's easier to stick with what you know than to change something that's already working.

There already was a television commercial in production but this wasn't due to air for four weeks. SPCA needed to do something fast to drive awareness of the product and generate sales to keep the trade onside.

Solution

Because of the SPCA's strong brand values and the cause-related nature of the product, the agency believed a Facebook campaign targeting key buyers would work well. The key objective was to not only generate Facebook fans but to also convert these into real customers.

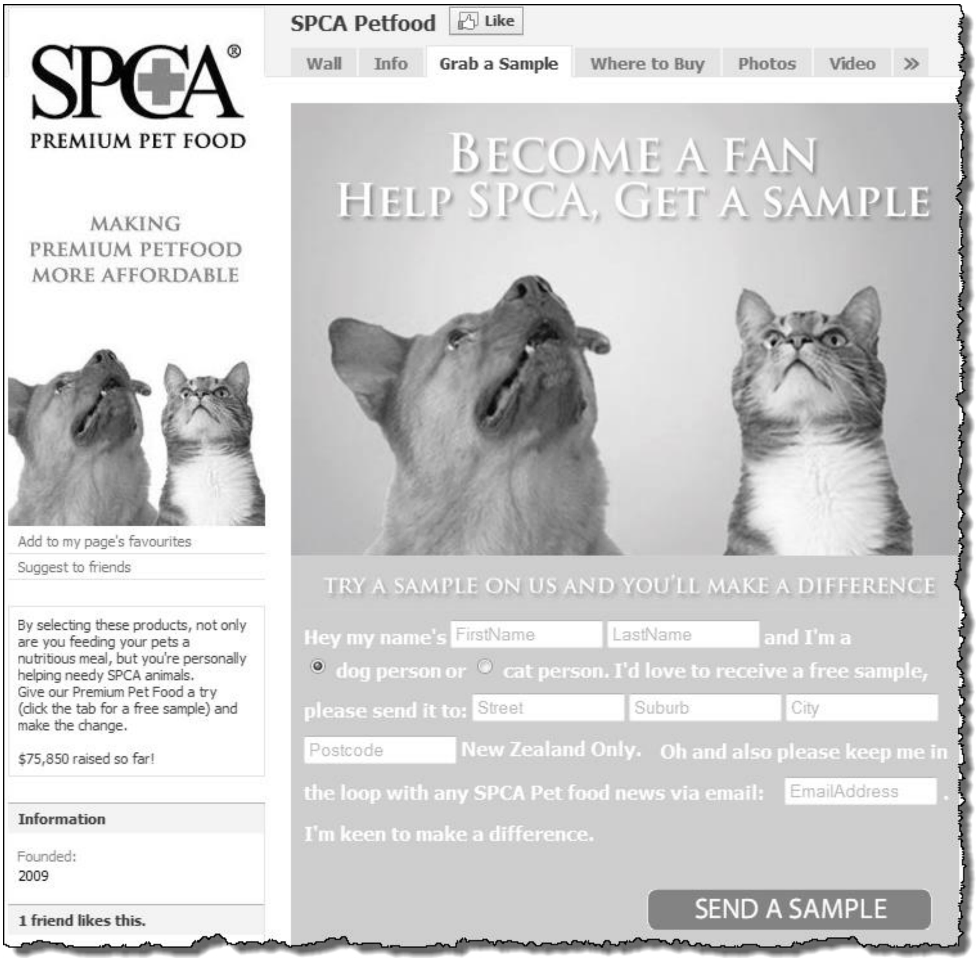
The agency put the following elements together:

Custom landing page

Rather than just set up a Facebook page they developed a custom landing page within Facebook which explained to people what SPCA wanted them to do when they arrived on the page. The agency designed something visually interesting to capture the visitor's interest immediately. The page is at http://bit.ly/cEDxoN – while you're there, become a fan by 'Liking' them.

Build a database of qualified buyers

The agency added the ability to request a sample right from the landing page. They understood that a lot of people would just support the SPCA and that's great but they really wanted to engage with people that would try and buy the product.


SPCA Petfood
Like
Wall
Info
Grab a Sample
Where to Buy
Photos
Video
»
SPCA®
PREMIUM PET FOOD
MAKING PREMIUM PETFOOD MORE AFFORDABLE
Add to my page's favourites
Suggest to friends
SEND A SAMPLE

BECOME A FAN
HELP SPCA, GET A SAMPLE

TRY A SAMPLE ON US AND YOU'LL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Hey my name's FirstName LastName and I'm a ● dog person or ○ cat person. I'd love to receive a free sample, please send it to: Street Suburb City Postcode New Zealand Only. Oh and also please keep me in the loop with any SPCA Pet food news via email: EmailAddress. I'm keen to make a difference.

By selecting these products, not only are you feeding your pets a nutritious meal, but you're personally helping needy SPCA animals.
Give our Premium Pet Food a try (click the tab for a free sample) and make the change.

$75,850 raised so far!

Information

Founded:
2009

1 friend likes this.

Figure 8: Custom landing page for SPCA

Story forms to engage
To make the form more interesting they used the story-form approach. Rather than a long boring list of fields, the agency created a story to engage the user and build commitment to take action.

Secure a personalised URL
To have a simple memorable easily-spreadable URL it’s important to have a short personalised Facebook URL. Once you have 25 fans you can go to facebook.com/yourname to claim your branded URL. In this instance it was facebook.com/SPCAPetfood.

Build initial fans through friends
Rather than jump straight into advertising, the agency tapped into the personal networks of everyone involved in the project. This built a strong core fan base that would help spread the stories.

Laser target initial advertising

The agency didn't advertise to everyone in New Zealand; instead they targeted the most important buying group for the client. This was slowly opened up to other groups as the campaign matured. They also used the ability to target friends of fans. One of the main reasons people join new fan pages on Facebook is because their friends have become fans. This helped make the advertising even more effective.

Test multiple ad versions

The agency ran several versions of ads to optimise performance. The top performing ads had two to three times the conversion rate and a significantly lower cost per click.

Engage, engage, engage

The SPCA did a fantastic job of answering questions and posting content on the page to keep things fresh. This was a significant element in the success of the campaign as every post by every fan is seen by all their friends which fuels the viral growth of the Fan page.

The key to the solution was taking a considered marketing approach and uncovering the solution that best fitted the client rather than jumping to the latest fashionable trend. This marketing-led solution, with a great visual design and smart technical integration between the different systems, delivered results.

Results and rewards

For a very modest spend SPCA Premium Pet food attracted 10,000 fans within a week and had over 25,000 fans after three weeks. The campaign generated 40 million impressions and created a database of 3,500 sample requests from qualified buyers. This also created a secondary benefit of an e-mail database to be used to contact customers in the future.

As of writing this report, over NZ$76,000 had been raised for the SPCA by Brand Support. In addition, SPCA premium pet food has nearly 45,000 fans.

The value of the engagement and dialogue with this group of customers cannot be underestimated. The ability to answer concerns, address issues and help customers with the product has been of remarkable value.

Overall, a great cause, a great product and an outstanding result, which just proves that if you have something worth talking about people will listen.

Pages versus profiles

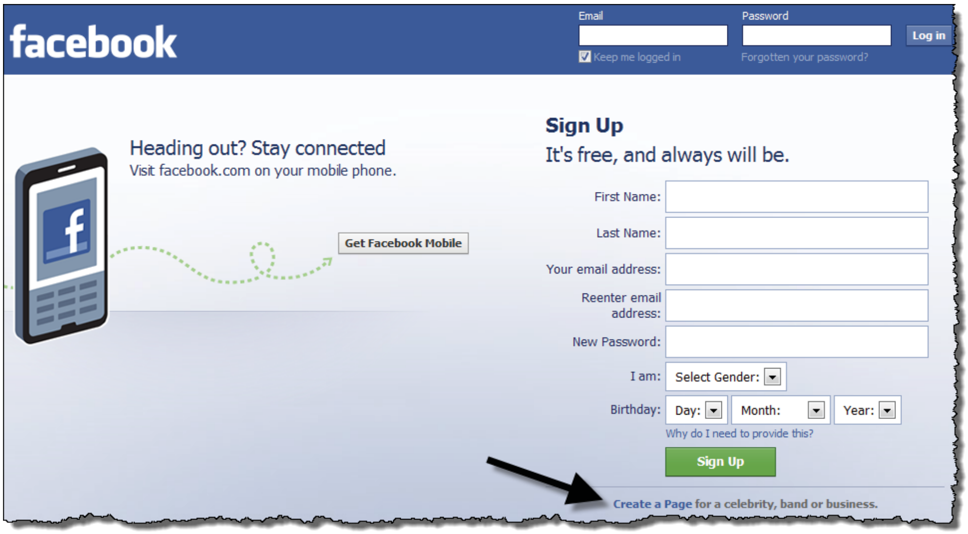
No doubt one of the most confusing aspects of Facebook is its terminology. It takes existing online terminology and confuses everyone – none more so than its use of the terms 'Page' and 'Profile'.

A Page is something that organisations, celebrities, entities can create; a Profile is something that individuals (you and I, your friends and relatives and so on) are able to create and populate with information about our daily lives. When an individual joins Facebook they are given a Profile; an organisation has to jump through several hoops and different screens to set up a Page.

Because Facebook is designed primarily as a place for individuals to hang out online, finding the right screens to set up an organisation or business entity page (which is actually a page with a series of tabs running across the top of it, looking almost exactly like a profile, leading to more confusion) can be tricky.

To set up a business entity on Facebook, visit Facebook.com (make sure you are not logged in under your own profile) and click on the small link near the bottom of the screen called 'Create a Page' (see Figure 9).

You will then be taken to a screen that allows you to begin your naming process (see Figure 10).



☑ Keep me logged in

Forgotten your password?

Heading out? Stay connected

Visit facebook.com on your mobile phone.

Sign Up

It's free, and always will be.

First Name:

Last Name:

Your email address:

Reenter email address:

New Password:

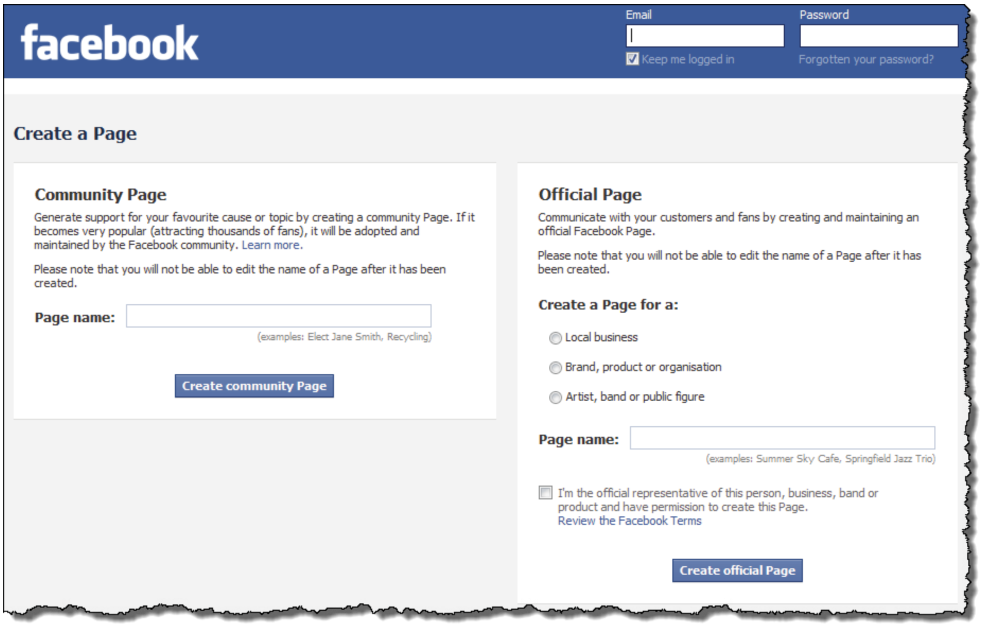
I am: Select Gender:

Birthday: Day: Month: Year:

Why do I need to provide this?

Create a Page for a celebrity, band or business.

Figure 9: The Facebook sign-up screen; note the small link at the bottom to create a page for a celebrity, band or business



☑ Keep me logged in

Forgotten your password?

Create a Page

Community Page

Generate support for your favourite cause or topic by creating a community Page. If it becomes very popular (attracting thousands of fans), it will be adopted and maintained by the Facebook community. Learn more.

Please note that you will not be able to edit the name of a Page after it has been created.

Page name:

(examples: Elect Jane Smith, Recycling)

Official Page

Communicate with your customers and fans by creating and maintaining an official Facebook Page.

Please note that you will not be able to edit the name of a Page after it has been created.

Create a Page for a:

○ Local business

○ Brand, product or organisation

○ Artist, band or public figure

Page name:

(examples: Summer Sky Cafe, Springfield Jazz Trio)

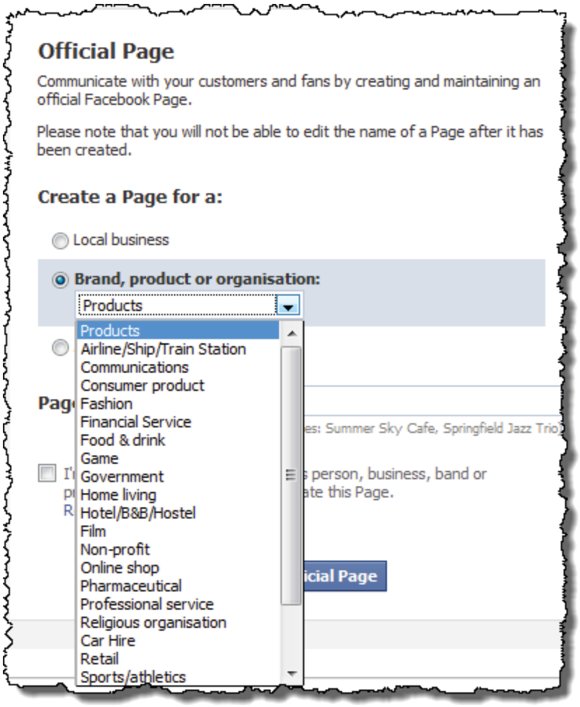
☐ I'm the official representative of this person, business, band or product and have permission to create this Page.
Review the Facebook Terms

Figure 10: The start of the page creation process on Facebook

Ignore the ‘Community Page’ offering (but by all means take advantage of their offer to learn more and decide for yourself if it is worth you creating a community page – it’s not very often that an organisation new to Facebook will gain immediate benefit from one).

Once you click on the circle to the left of ‘Brand, product or organisation’ you will be presented with a drop-down scrolling list of options from which to choose one that most suits your organisation (see Figure 11).

Once you have chosen the product category that best fits your organisation or brand, given it a name (which cannot be changed later) and ticked the box next to the text, ‘I’m the official representative of this person, business, band or product and have permission to create this Page’, click on the ‘Create official Page’ button (see Figure 12).



Official Page

Communicate with your customers and fans by creating and maintaining an official Facebook Page.

Please note that you will not be able to edit the name of a Page after it has been created.

Create a Page for a:

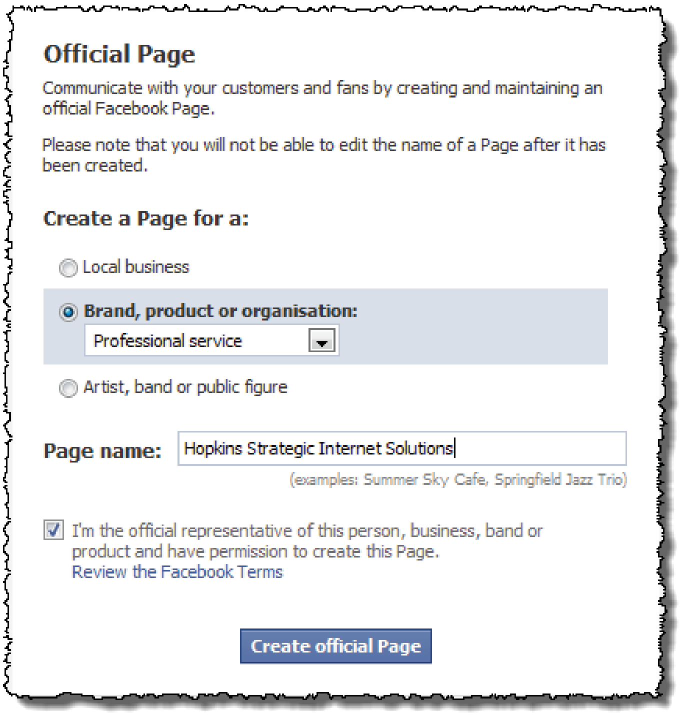
○ Local business

● **Brand, product or organisation:**

Products ▾

Products
Airline/Ship/Train Station
Communications
Consumer product
Fashion
Financial Service
Food & drink
Game
Government
Home living
Hotel/B&B/Hostel
Film
Non-profit
Online shop
Pharmaceutical
Professional service
Religious organisation
Car Hire
Retail
Sports/athletics

Figure 11: Drop-down options for a brand, product or organisation in Facebook Pages



Official Page

Communicate with your customers and fans by creating and maintaining an official Facebook Page.

Please note that you will not be able to edit the name of a Page after it has been created.

Create a Page for a:

○ Local business

● **Brand, product or organisation:**

Professional service ▾

○ Artist, band or public figure

Page name: Hopkins Strategic Internet Solutions

(examples: Summer Sky Cafe, Springfield Jazz Trio)

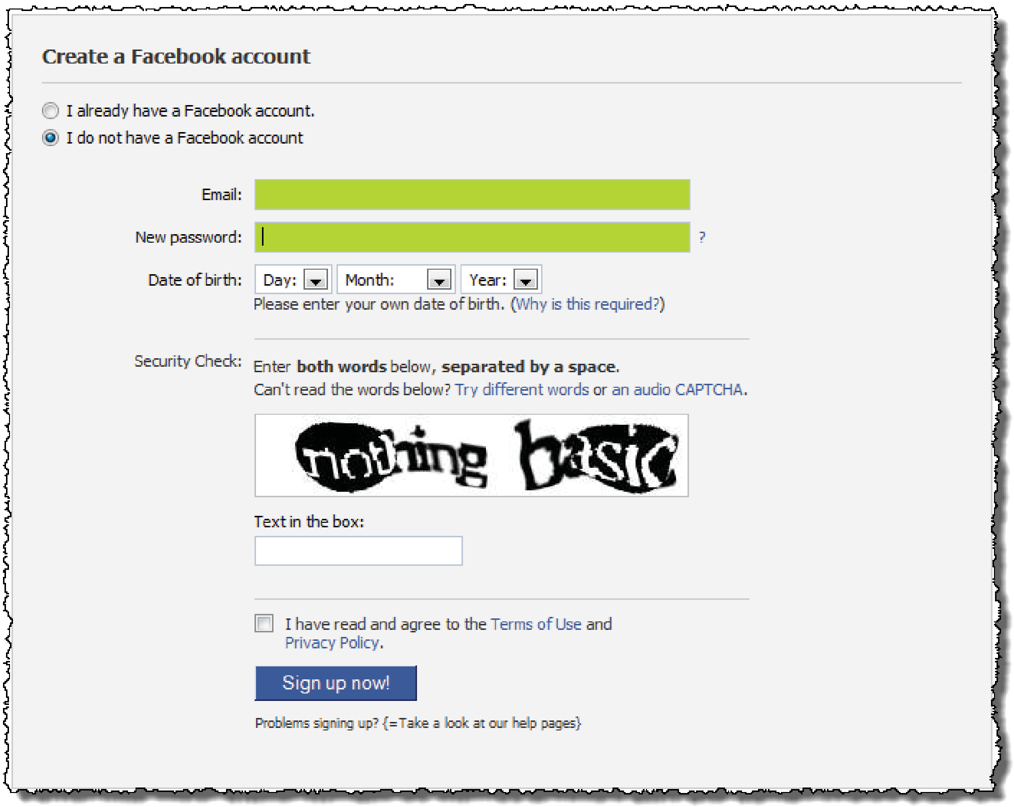
☑ I'm the official representative of this person, business, band or product and have permission to create this Page.
Review the Facebook Terms

Create official Page

Figure 12: Example of a ‘professional service’ option and name of the page

I’d also recommend that your legal advisors look at the Facebook terms and conditions before you go ahead and let them point out that Facebook has a number of interesting terms, including that it owns the copyright to any content you put up there; and that it owns the right to reuse your content at their discretion.

Of course, Facebook are renowned for moving the goal posts without notice and those terms may already be modified or removed by the time this report goes to print. As one correspondent put it, Facebook tweaks the engine while the car is still out on the racetrack.



Create a Facebook account

○ I already have a Facebook account.

● I do not have a Facebook account

Email:

New password: ?

Date of birth: Day: Month: Year:

Please enter your own date of birth. (Why is this required?)

Security Check: Enter **both words** below, **separated by a space.**

Can't read the words below? Try different words or an audio CAPTCHA.

nothing basic

Text in the box:

☐ I have read and agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy.

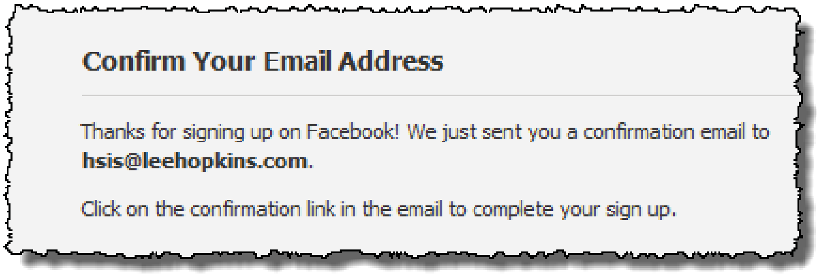
Problems signing up? {=Take a look at our help pages}

Figure 13: Entering e-mail, password, date of birth and CAPTCHA details

Once the Create official Page button has been clicked, and their little warning pop-up screen has been tidied away, you will be offered the chance to create a new Facebook account (see Figure 13).

Note: Resist the urge to use your own Facebook profile account. If necessary, set up a new e-mail account at your organisation and use it for this business Facebook account.

Once you receive your confirmation e-mail, click on the link contained in it and log out (the link takes you back to the page where you started the registration process – very confusing!). Go to Facebook's home page again and log in with the e-mail address and password used to create the account.



Confirm Your Email Address

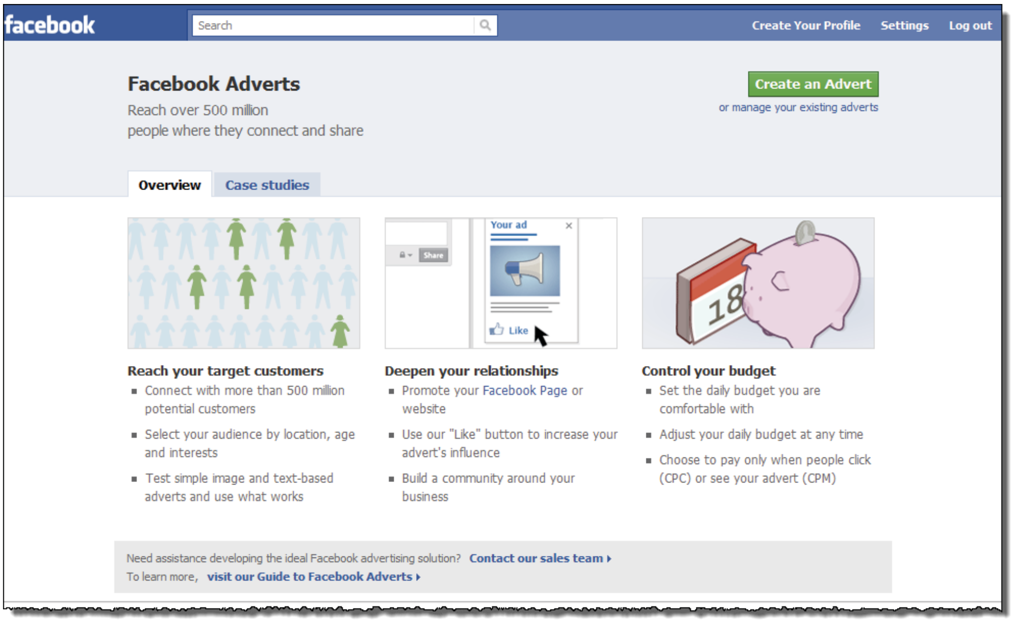
Thanks for signing up on Facebook! We just sent you a confirmation email to **hsis@leehopkins.com**.

Click on the confirmation link in the email to complete your sign up.

Figure 14: Confirmation of signup screen with notification of confirmation e-mail address

You will then be presented with a screen offering you the chance to create an advert. For the moment you can ignore it (see Figure 15).

Click on the ‘Facebook Page’ link in the middle of the screen under the ‘Deepen your relationships’ column (see Figure 16).


facebook
Search
Create Your Profile
Settings
Log out
Create an Advert
or manage your existing adverts
Overview
Case studies
Your ad
Share
Like
18

Facebook Adverts

Reach over 500 million
people where they connect and share

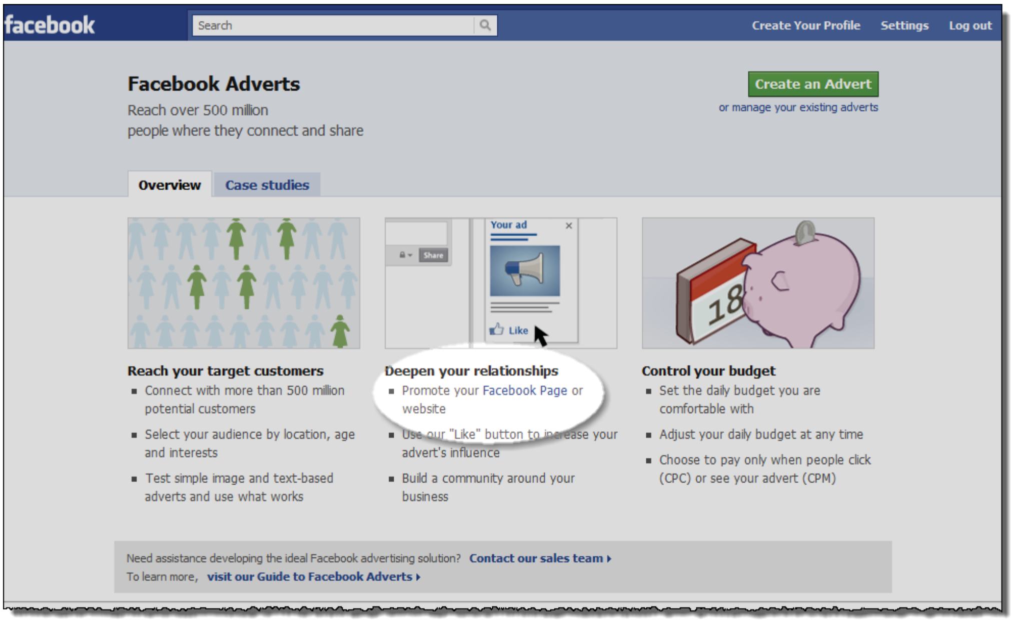
Reach your target customers
- Connect with more than 500 million potential customers
- Select your audience by location, age and interests
- Test simple image and text-based adverts and use what works

Deepen your relationships
- Promote your Facebook Page or website
- Use our "Like" button to increase your advert's influence
- Build a community around your business

Control your budget
- Set the daily budget you are comfortable with
- Adjust your daily budget at any time
- Choose to pay only when people click (CPC) or see your advert (CPM)

Need assistance developing the ideal Facebook advertising solution? **Contact our sales team ▸**
To learn more, **visit our Guide to Facebook Adverts ▸**

Figure 15: The first screen seen when logging into a Facebook page


facebook
Search
Create Your Profile
Settings
Log out
Create an Advert
or manage your existing adverts
Overview
Case studies
Your ad
Share
Like
18

Facebook Adverts

Reach over 500 million
people where they connect and share

Reach your target customers
- Connect with more than 500 million potential customers
- Select your audience by location, age and interests
- Test simple image and text-based adverts and use what works

Deepen your relationships
- Promote your Facebook Page or website
- Use our "Like" button to increase your advert's influence
- Build a community around your business

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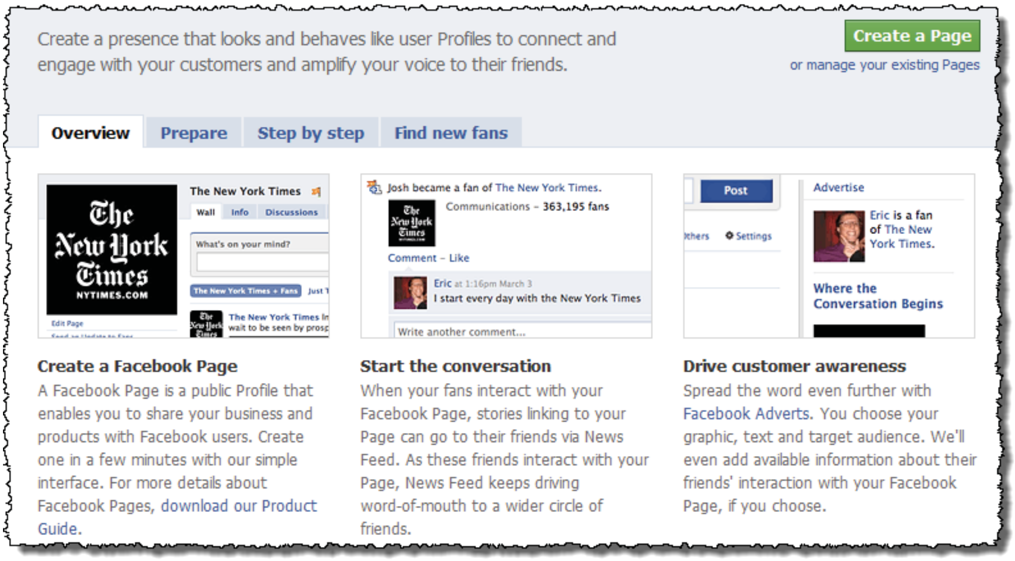
- Adjust your daily budget at any time
- Choose to pay only when people click (CPC) or see your advert (CPM)

Need assistance developing the ideal Facebook advertising solution? **Contact our sales team ▸**
To learn more, **visit our Guide to Facebook Adverts ▸**

Figure 16: The link to your Facebook page



Create a Page
or manage your existing Pages
Overview
Prepare
Step by step
Find new fans
The New York Times
NYTIMES.COM
Wall
Info
Discussions
What's on your mind?
The New York Times + Fans
Edit Page
Josh became a fan of The New York Times.
Communications – 363,195 fans
Comment – Like
Eric at 1:16pm March 3
Write another comment...
Post
Settings
Advertise
Eric is a fan of The New York Times.
Where the Conversation Begins

Create a presence that looks and behaves like user Profiles to connect and engage with your customers and amplify your voice to their friends.

I start every day with the New York Times

Create a Facebook Page

A Facebook Page is a public Profile that enables you to share your business and products with Facebook users. Create one in a few minutes with our simple interface. For more details about Facebook Pages, download our Product Guide.

Start the conversation

When your fans interact with your Facebook Page, stories linking to your Page can go to their friends via News Feed. As these friends interact with your Page, News Feed keeps driving word-of-mouth to a wider circle of friends.

Drive customer awareness

Spread the word even further with Facebook Adverts. You choose your graphic, text and target audience. We'll even add available information about their friends' interaction with your Facebook Page, if you choose.

Figure 17: The ‘Create a Page’ screen with useful additional reading material

After clicking on the Facebook Page link you will be shown a screen that offers several tabs/screens of useful background material (I suggest you read them) and, in the top right hand corner, a green Create a Page button (see Figure 17).

Click on the Create a Page button to begin creating your organisation’s page on Facebook. You will be taken to the same screen you saw in Figure 12. Confusing? Oh yes! Complete the details again and hit the Create official Page button.

Why would Facebook show you the same screen as when you first created your account? Because although they don’t explain this, the screen (the second time around) creates the page. This enables you to not only have a page for ‘Hopkins Strategic Internet Solutions’ (the example we are working with here), but pages for various divisions within the ‘Hopkins Strategic Internet Solutions’ global mega-corporation.

Thus pages could be set up for ‘customer service’, ‘investor relations’, ‘recruitment/ HR’, ‘social club’, ‘Singapore office’, ‘Sydney office’, 'St Moritz office’… the list goes on.

Once you have clicked on the ‘Create official Page’ button, you will be taken to your page where you can begin filling in the blanks (see Figure 18).

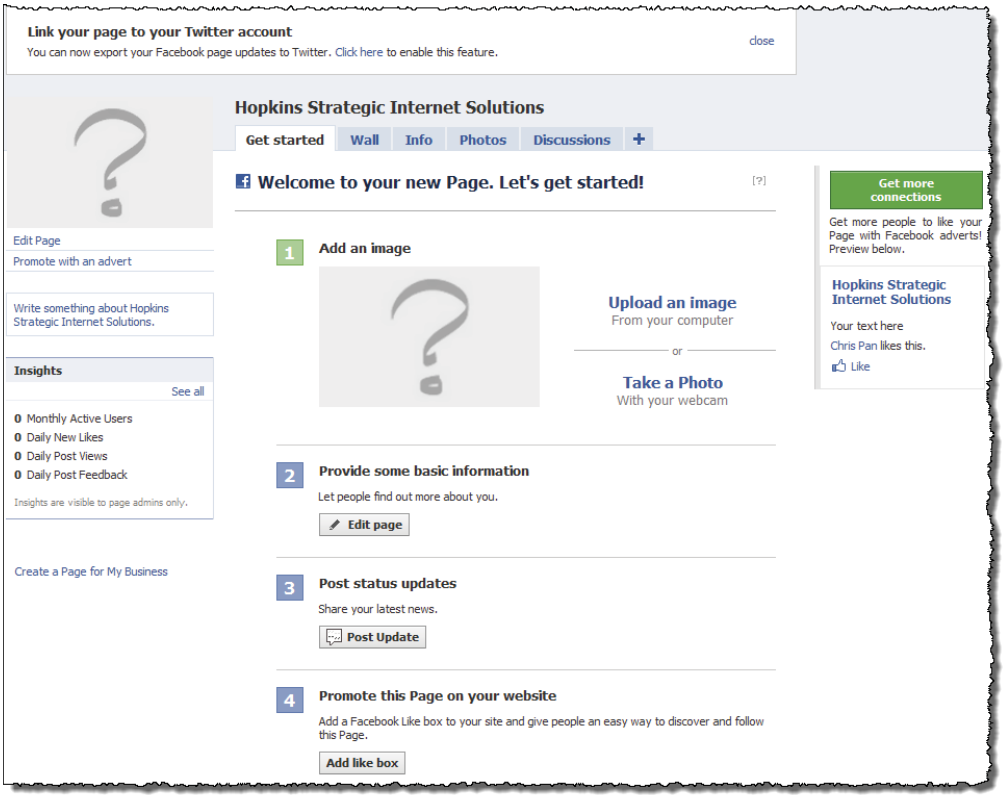
And don’t worry if you don’t get all of the editing done in one session; you can log out and when you log back in later you can complete your edits.

Just don’t dawdle about making them; once your page has been created it is ‘findable’ by Facebook’s search engine.

Five golden rules for Facebook

There are five simple rules that will help you get the most out of Facebook:

- Understand the difference between Pages and Profiles – Profiles are what we as individuals have; Pages are what organisations, brands and celebrities have. Pages have accompanying statistics (albeit very basic) and offer the organisation the chance to customise their Facebook presence to a degree.
- Discover the right applications – There are lots of social tools that can be



Link your page to your Twitter account

You can now export your Facebook page updates to Twitter. Click here to enable this feature.

close

Hopkins Strategic Internet Solutions

Get started | Wall | Info | Photos | Discussions | +

Edit Page

Promote with an advert

Write something about Hopkins Strategic Internet Solutions.

Insights

See all

0 Monthly Active Users

0 Daily New Likes

0 Daily Post Views

0 Daily Post Feedback

Insights are visible to page admins only.

Create a Page for My Business

Welcome to your new Page. Let's get started! [?]

1 **Add an image**

Upload an image
From your computer

or

Take a Photo
With your webcam

2 **Provide some basic information**

Let people find out more about you.

Edit page

3 **Post status updates**

Share your latest news.

Post Update

4 **Promote this Page on your website**

Add a Facebook Like box to your site and give people an easy way to discover and follow this Page.

Add like box

Get more connections

Get more people to like your Page with Facebook adverts! Preview below.

Hopkins Strategic Internet Solutions

Your text here

Chris Pan likes this.

Like

Figure 18: The Facebook Page canvas.

plugged in to a Facebook page that allow for the experience of visitors to be more social. Use the free ones that come as a default, but also search for applications that work with pages (there are a lot less of them than there are applications that work with individual Profiles, however it can cost very little to have an application developed for you that meets your branding and social experience requirements.

- Understand that photos and videos are the killer applications – People love to see themselves (even if they proclaim otherwise at the time); they love to compare themselves to others to see if they are thinner, prettier, more handsome, look good in those new clothes and so on (vanity is a collective trait of humankind). So the more photos and videos of individuals (fans or those who like them) an organisation can have on its pages, the better. Take photos at events, launches and/or meet the team moments. When any opportunity presents itself to take photos, take them and similarly with video.
- Tags are the way to draw in the crowds – If photos and videos are the killer apps, then tags are the mechanism by which those applications can work their magic. When a person is tagged (either by the organisation or by an individual) that fact appears in that person's news feed, viewable by their friends. So if Jane Smith is tagged as appearing in a photo at an event run by XYZCorp, not only does Jane get

notification that she's been tagged, but all of Jane's friends see that she's been tagged in their news feeds, with a link to the photo where Jane appears. This way friends of Jane who wouldn't normally be able to be reached by the organisation can be drawn to visit the organisation's Facebook page. The same applies with video (perhaps even more so) – we like to watch our friends in action.

- Constantly check if you are sending out status updates or spam updates – Ask yourself if the information you are giving is primarily of value to the reader or more of value to the organisation. Always tip the scales in favour of giving value to the reader. If you are not sure whether you are tending to favour the fans or the organisation, check out 'Insights', the in-built stats reporting package. If a large number of fans or friends removed themselves from your list (to 'unfriend' or un-fan') then it is likely you overstepped the mark and started sending out spam rather than valuable information.

Further resources

I have written extensively on Facebook in a previous Ark Group publication, *Social Media: the new business communication landscape* (find out more at http://bit.ly/aKifLL). If you are serious about taking advantage of Facebook's opportunities, I suggest you pick up a copy.

I would also recommend two additional resources: the superb and recently published *facebook me! by* Dave Awl.[2] Covering areas of interest to both individual and business Facebookers, it is a compelling and easy read that has *at least* one nugget of golden information on every page.

What are you doing right now?
DAVE AWL Author
is ready to show you all the ins and outs of Facebook...
facebook me!
A Guide to Having Fun with Your Friends and Promoting Your Projects on Facebook
Connect with old friends and make new ones using Facebook's social networking tools.
Share photos with your friends with the easy Photos application.

Figure 20: *facebook me!* written by Dave Awl

More than just a basic how-to guide, the book covers all the bells and whistles of creating a rich Facebook experience, providing smart strategies for setting up profiles, privacy and feeds, socializing, sharing, publishing, promoting, and the politics of using Facebook at the office. It's a finely-detailed roadmap that helps business communicators avoid Facebook potholes.

In addition to the basics, the author has set up a book page on Facebook to keep the interest in the book fresh. Within this group, discussions cover what is arguably the most interesting and contagious aspect of Facebook: the apps. Since the apps can be overwhelming to new users the discussions provide clear, simple, concise instructions on how to use specific apps and get the most out of them: from installing them, using their controls and updating when necessary.

The other additional resource I recommend reading is from *The Advance Guard* as found in their must-read Facebook primer, 'About Face' (freely available from http://aboutface.theadvanceguard.com).

★ THE ADVANCE GUARD ★

Figure 21: *The Advance Guard's* 'About Face'

As they say:

"Remember most of all: social marketing – especially on Facebook – is the art of interacting with people and contributing to a community rather than just broadcasting promotional messages. This, more than any design or functionality strategy, is the key to growing a successful Fanbase of enthusiastic and engaged consumers."

Amen to that.

References

1. 'SAP Global Survey: Michael Dell', Global Neighbourhoods, 10 February 2008; can be found at: http://bit.ly/yiOre.
2. Awl, D., *facebook me!*, Peachpit Press, US, 2009; can be found at: http://amzn.to/aQrbTt.

Chapter 7: Social networking – Everything else

THERE ARE other social networking sites around as well as Facebook (which is so big it was worth spending some considerable time examining it).

Two that particularly stand out as prime examples of their type are Ning and LinkedIn.

Ning

Ning is a platform for creating your own social network. Plenty of brands have taken space there and created their own community site such as Ellen DeGeneres, Good Charlotte, Miley Cyrus, Linkin Park, Hershey's and Little Brown among many.

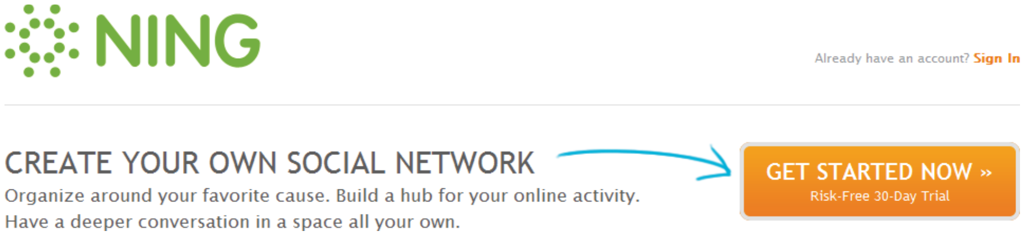
It works by allowing an organisation to choose from a collection of unique templates, then add and place various applications around the pages of the community site.

Because it uses CSS code to underpin the design 'look n feel' of the site, which allows for customisation of design elements, graphics, colours and so on, each community site can look entirely unique – even sites that use the same base template. A new feature, just added as this report is being written, allows for a completely customised main page, giving the organisation free reign to design its own landing page.

Additionally, Ning allows for domain masking, which means that you can have a Ning-hosted community site looking as though it was sitting on your own company servers; 'community.xyzcorp.com', for example, instead of 'xyzcorp.ning.com'.

Unlike some other hosting platforms, Ning offers additional features for advertising, social games, storefronts, donations and more, to make your Ning site a critical component of any revenue or fundraising goals. Even though your community site is hosted on a third-party platform, you control all of the advertising or fund-raising features of the site, allowing you to direct visitors to online sales channels should you wish. Having those features built-in can save an organisation a considerable amount of time and money that they would otherwise have to pay design and e-commerce consultancies.

Creating a community (for example, around a brand) in Ning offers fewer



CREATE YOUR OWN SOCIAL NETWORK

Organize around your favorite cause. Build a hub for your online activity. Have a deeper conversation in a space all your own.

Figure 1: Ning

distractions than Facebook Pages and MySpace profiles do. They are captive in the Ning community and are presented with fewer opportunities to wander off to other areas.

Building on the privacy aspects of other community sites such as Facebook and MySpace, Ning allows for a higher level of privacy than even MySpace, which itself has higher privacy options than Facebook (although, of course, all that could change in a day, particularly as Facebook is well known for changing options and resetting defaults on what appears to be a whim).

Further, adding other Web 2.0 tools is easier, in my opinion, within Ning than it is within Facebook and MySpace, but no doubt that is a contestable point of view, which plenty of other communicators and 'hard core' users of those services would dispute.

Ning – why would you?

Ning was one of the early 'build your own community' sites, but now that Facebook has greatly increased its offering to companies with its Pages, the reasons to use Ning instead of any other service begin to diminish, but only slightly.

What Facebook and MySpace do not offer is a totally-branded environment. As Ning point out on their website, the social network TuDiabetes uses its premium services to own and promote the 'tudiabetes.com' domain name. TuDiabetes control how their community space on the web interacts with their audience and there is no distracting or competing branding.

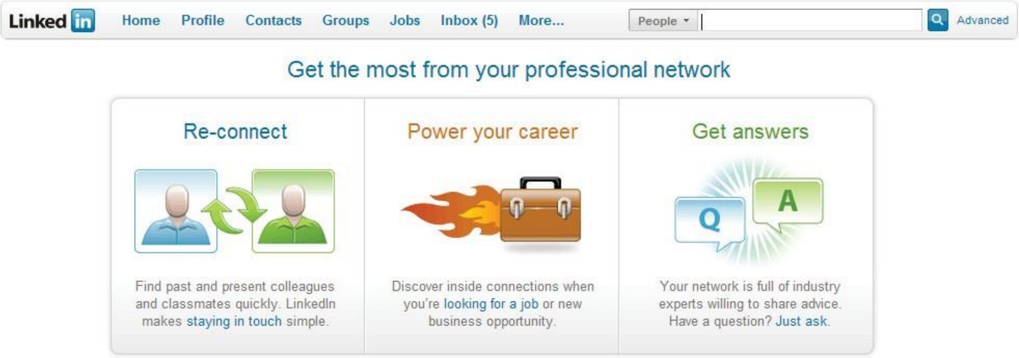
LinkedIn

LinkedIn (linkedin.com) is fast becoming the 'go to' place for individuals looking to network and companies looking to hire skilled, highly networked individuals.

There are two principle parts to LinkedIn; the individual profile and the corporate profile. Having a corporate profile on LinkedIn makes good sense: access to individuals who 'get' this new communication landscape and are highly leveraged information workers; and to allow these information workers to view job opportunities in your field and better understand the types of roles your company hires for and the latest news on people that have recently joined the company.

It is the place to connect with professionals in your industry, or as LinkedIn says:

LinkedIn is an interconnected network of experienced professionals from around the world, representing 170 industries and 200 countries. You can find, be introduced to and collaborate with qualified professionals



Find past and present colleagues and classmates quickly. LinkedIn makes staying in touch simple.

Discover inside connections when you're looking for a job or new business opportunity.

Your network is full of industry experts willing to share advice. Have a question? Just ask.

Figure 2: The social network LinkedIn

that you need to work with to accomplish your goals.

Using LinkedIn for the individual's benefit

As a business communicator you can use LinkedIn for your business needs to:

- Reconnect with a host of current and prior associates across most of the firms you have worked for. The best way to get this done is to use the 'Import Contacts' feature. This will allow you to securely download the contents of your Gmail, Yahoo, AOL or Outlook address book into LinkedIn. From there you can automatically see who in your contacts is already a part of the LinkedIn network.
- Search for connections via your college affiliation and your former employers.
- Join 'Groups' that allow you to get connected with others that share your interests or past employers. For instance, I belong to the Fans of Digsby, adtech-Sydney, Association of Virtual Worlds, Melcrum's Communicators Network, Social Media Marketing and vBusiness Expo groups. These groups allow members to have discussions, share news and get updates of relevant interest.
- Receive testimonials about your work. The single best way to get more recommendations is to write them. Alternately there is a 'Can you endorse me?' request feature that you can use to request a recommendation from a specific contact.
- Ask questions of your contacts, or post answers to questions in your area of expertise. Either way you are able to demonstrate knowledge and increase your exposure.

Using LinkedIn for the company's benefit

As a business communicator, you can also use LinkedIn to further the social media involvement of your employer for the following benefits:

Gain more business

As soon as the company begins networking on LinkedIn, it increases its chances of reaching new customers. After all, individuals are consumers too. However, be prepared and be willing to work at it.

Gain priceless competitive intelligence

Within LinkedIn you can see your competitors' teams, clients, references, and plenty of other information not readily available otherwise. You may also catch a glimpse of what they've been up to recently or who they've let go of that may be an invaluable addition to your team.

Obtain greater visibility

LinkedIn provides options that will allow a profile to be indexed by search engines such as Google. Making use of these options allows for greater visibility on the web. Links from high-traffic websites like LinkedIn provide what is known as 'Google Juice': a high-level recommendation that helps promote the corporate or brand website further up the search results.

Conduct market research

If considering designing a new product or service offering, see what type of demand there is for that type of product or service. Do research on what other companies inside and outside of the company's own are offering. Additionally, one can make great use of the Q&A feature to post questions; I've never failed to be amazed at the incredible quality of the answers that come back.

Facilitate introductions

LinkedIn offers the opportunity to ask the people you already know to introduce you to someone you'd like to know. This gives you or a member of your team greater credibility and improves the chances of actually getting that meeting you want, in turn leading to a greater opportunity to 'make that sale'.

Show recommendations

We are very often judged by the company we keep. Allowing and encouraging those the company has done business with to recommend your company's products or services is a powerful marketing tool and one that should be taken full advantage of.

The website Linked Intelligence ('the unofficial source of all things LinkedIn' as it brands itself) offers a post[1] on 100+ smart ways to use LinkedIn, linking off to articles focused on business development, marketing and sales; career management, personal branding and resumes; job search; recruiting; growing one's network; keeping in touch; meeting face-to-face; and organizing and extending groups, *inter alia.*

Facebook or MySpace may not be the best place to promote your brand or company (I'd use a skilled consultancy or consultant to help you reach an informed decision). But if that is the case then LinkedIn *is* the social networking site of choice, if you wish to promote your business and services and build business relationships that will prove profitable to everyone involved. All 500 of the Fortune 500 are represented in LinkedIn; the above-mentioned benefits are the reasons why.

Podcasting

Podcasting is the 'forgotten middle child' of social media.

Not as old as blogging, having only been born in August 1994 and not as 'sexy' as its younger siblings video and Twitter, podcasting is social media's Jan Brady. But behind the plain Jan(e) exterior lies a powerhouse of potential that some organisations have used to tremendous benefit.

Podcasting is a refinement of a very simple protocol – to make available an audio soundfile for downloading. So is podcasting merely downloadable audio, the sort of file you see on intranets all over the world?

Most assuredly not. The reasons podcasts differ from downloadable audio are many, but come down to six key elements:

Podcasts can be subscribed to

A downloadable audio file relies on someone visiting a website or intranet site and saving it to a space on their hard drive. A podcast, however, comes to you. RSS technology (really simple syndication) has changed the dynamic of the operation; no longer do you have to visit that page every time you want to check if a new audio file has been uploaded, instead you can subscribe (via iTunes or other software applications) and have each new audio file delivered to your computer as soon as it's available. With 'podcatching' software like iTunes you can have those files synchronised to your portable audio player (your iPod, iPhone, iPad, mp3-playing device, smart phone, etc) while you make your morning cup of tea.

Podcasts are episodic in nature

Downloadable audio can be about anything: a meeting, a phone call, a piece of Paganini but podcasts tend to be recurring shows or episodes around a particular theme. And there are LOTS of themes (as you'll see later). Many pundits, when podcasting was first learning to walk, tried explaining podcasting as 'radio with a rewind button' and this definition gives a clue as to the type of formatting popular with podcast producers. Usually there is introductory music, musical sweeps (musical transitions between segments of the show), listener call-in lines or e-mail addresses and other traditional radio conventions. People subscribe to podcasts with the expectation that more than one edition or episode will be published. Also, there is no standard to how often they are published. Some podcast producers publish every day, some weekly, some fortnightly and some monthly. Similarly, there is no limit on how long the show needs to go on for; some last only five minutes, some stretch to two-plus hours at a time. So, too, some podcasts are a limited series of episodes (think 7 Steps to a Fitter You, with each step being an episode); others can be a never-ending series of shows, much like your traditional breakfast or drive-time radio.

Podcasts don’t have to be consumed where they are produced

Podcasts are transportable, so that you can use podcatching software like iTunes to sync them to your MP3 player (the MP3 format has become the standard format for podcast audio – it compresses the audio file, leading to a barely noticeable reduction in audio quality but a much smaller file size, which is ideal for fast downloading). The ability to move the file to a different playing medium than your desktop computer means you can listen to podcasts while at the gym, while driving to/from work, while walking the dog, while waiting for a plane, while doing the washing up or the ironing. You can’t do that with any other broadcast medium – try watching a video whilst driving! The MP3 files can be transferred to smart devices, to dedicated MP3 players, burnt to CD or listened to over in-car FM radio.

Podcasts can be listened to when YOU want

Because of their portable nature, podcasts can be time-shifted; that is, you listen to them when it’s convenient to you and not necessarily when the episode was published. For example, one of my favourite podcasts is, ‘For Immediate Release: The Hobson and Holtz Report’ (http://bit.ly/9qXn1N) which is a podcast for PR and business communication professionals produced weekly. It is published during the early hours of the morning Australian time and so were it to be a traditional radio show I would have no way of listening to it other than stay up late one night. However, because it automatically downloads to my computer pretty much as soon as it is published, I can listen to it the next morning or the morning after that if my schedule is full. Some of my favourite radio shows from NPR in the US, the BBC in the UK and the ABC in Australia are re-purposed as podcasts, allowing me to listen to them at my convenience (often, while driving from one client to the next); most radio stations now repurpose their shows as podcasts as a matter of course.

Podcasts can target micro and/or niche audiences

Traditional radio shows require audiences in order to survive, be they produced by public service broadcasters or for-profit ones. Therefore, those shows must be of interest to a large enough section of the population to make it worthwhile (audience numbers, reach, advertising potential, and so on). But podcasting allows a producer to reach an audience of 100 and still be profitable, if profit is in that instance defined by advertising revenue. There are many podcasts targeted at highly-defined niche audiences – long-distance runners, for example, where the audience is tiny, but where advertisers are willing to sponsor a show in order to reach that market with a highly targeted message. Or a producer could create a podcast for, say, CEOs living/ working in Surrey, UK and as long as they created compelling content that kept people coming back for more, that producer could expect to receive some positive reviews and sponsorship/advertising offers.

The barriers to entry are incredibly low

The cost to produce a typical broadcast radio show is immense, not just for the technology, but by investing in the staff to manage it and the on-air talent. This compares to a podcast, where you can acquire all of the technology you require for around £30. Of course, you can spend more if you want to, but most listeners won't care if you spend £30 or £3,000 on a professional-level microphone, let alone be able to tell, because 'content is king' in podcasting (assuming that your audio quality is listenable and not atrocious). You can use a cheap head-set microphone and a laptop or desktop pc to record a podcast, use free editing software to refine it, add in some free sound effects and music and have the edited, published episode stored online forever for a tiny US$10 month. Plus, you can do all of that in the time it takes for a major broadcaster to have one of a series of meetings about an upcoming episode of a flagship radio show.

How big is podcasting?

According to a recent survey by Edison Research,[2] 45 per cent of all Americans (the only surveyed audience I could find) are aware of podcasting, while 23 per cent of Americans listen to podcasts, which has increased from 11 per cent in 2006. It is estimated that 70 million people have listened to a podcast.

As renown podcaster Heidi Miller[3] says, "Even though podcasting doesn't have a shiny new tool à la 'Foursquare' to tempt the uninitiated into publishing a feed for the next few years, it's still a pretty cool way to build an intimate following through ongoing content. And I say 'intimate' because there is something about podcasting that is far more relationship-building than, say, Facebook. You may amass Facebook friends and fans (oops, I mean likers), but how often do you truly interact with them? One click and they're off to play farmville."

Heidi goes on to argue, "Let's face it. There is something wonderfully intimate about listening to a podcaster speak in his/her authentic voice for ten or 30 minutes. It's more intimate than a blog post and far more intimiate than a Tweet; after listening to a podcast, many listeners say they feel like they *know* the host. Have you ever felt that from a Tweet?"

Business podcasting today

There are many organisations, not just broadcast companies, tapping into the power of podcasting. Many podcasts are created by small companies who are looking to podcasting as an affordable avenue for communication with their target audience, but there are also large companies who are podcasting as well, including:

- General Motors;
- Cisco Systems;
- Disneyland;
- IBM;
- McDonalds;
- BMW;
- Kinsey Institute;
- Deloitte; and
- Purina.

But you don't have to go scouring the internet to find them. iTunes has possibly the largest collection of podcasts in its store directory, segmented into categories (see Figure 3).

You will find quite a diverse range of categories on iTunes. Even within the 'Business' section you will find the sub-categories 'Business news', 'Careers', 'Investing', 'Management & Marketing' and 'Shopping', which covers consumerism and economic matters (refer to Figure 4).

So if your organisation is looking to reach other business people or consumer groups, a wander through the various podcast categories on iTunes will be an eye-opener as to the type and range of organisations already playing in this space. Universities are such large players in this

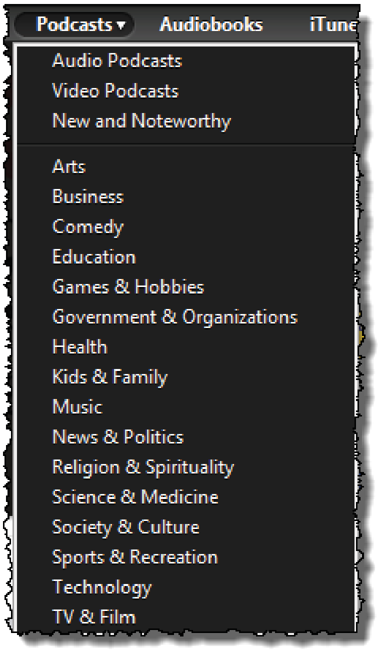
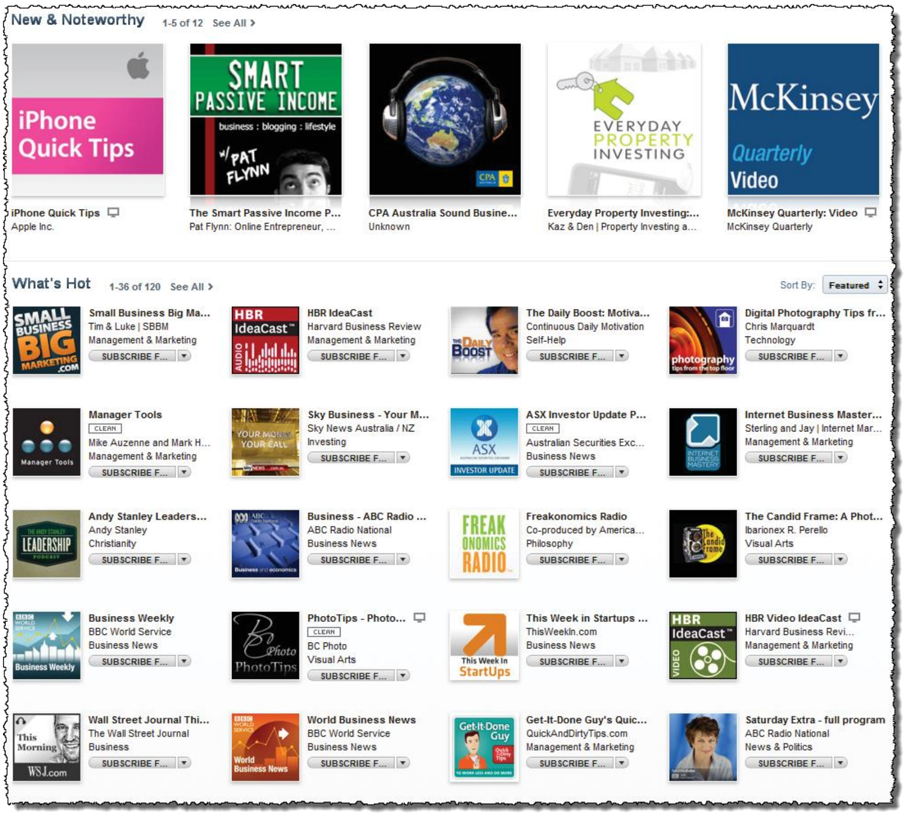

Podcasts ▾
Audiobooks
iTune
Audio Podcasts
Video Podcasts
New and Noteworthy
Arts
Business
Comedy
Education
Games & Hobbies
Government & Organizations
Health
Kids & Family
Music
News & Politics
Religion & Spirituality
Science & Medicine
Society & Culture
Sports & Recreation
Technology
TV & Film

Figure 3: iTunes podcast directory


New & Noteworthy
1-5 of 12
See All ›
iPhone Quick Tips
Apple Inc.
The Smart Passive Income P...
Pat Flynn: Online Entrepreneur, ...
CPA Australia Sound Busine...
Unknown
Everyday Property Investing:...
Kaz & Den | Property Investing a...
McKinsey Quarterly: Video
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Featured
Small Business Big Ma...
Tim & Luke | SBBM
Management & Marketing
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Continuous Daily Motivation
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Digital Photography Tips fr...
Chris Marquardt
Technology
Manager Tools
CLEAN
Mike Auzenne and Mark H...
Management & Marketing
Sky Business - Your M...
Sky News Australia / NZ
Investing
ASX Investor Update P...
CLEAN
Australian Securities Exc...
Business News
Internet Business Master...
Sterling and Jay | Internet Mar...
Management & Marketing
Andy Stanley Leaders...
Andy Stanley
Christianity
Business - ABC Radio ...
ABC Radio National
Business News
Freakonomics Radio
Co-produced by America...
Philosophy
The Candid Frame: A Phot...
Ibarionex R. Perello
Visual Arts
Business Weekly
BBC World Service
Business News
PhotoTips - Photo...
CLEAN
BC Photo
Visual Arts
This Week in Startups ...
ThisWeekIn.com
Business News
HBR Video IdeaCast
Harvard Business Revi...
Management & Marketing
Wall Street Journal Thi...
The Wall Street Journal
Business
World Business News
BBC World Service
Business News
Get-It-Done Guy's Quic...
QuickAndDirtyTips.com
Management & Marketing
Saturday Extra - full program
ABC Radio National
News & Politics
SUBSCRIBE F...

Figure 4: Some business podcasts in iTunes

space, delivering lectures and other material, that they get their own iTunes category away from podcasts – iTunes U.

‘Playing’ is the operative word – listeners will quickly tune out if the content they hear is not engaging and put together with a passion for the medium. We have all grown up with a steady diet of TV, radio, newsprint, online journalism and digital media. Our cynical radars are finely tuned and can quickly spot something that is put together in a half-hearted manner. Therefore it makes sense to find an evangelist or two within your organisation to help put podcasts together; not only will they have a passion for the medium, but they will probably know about the plethora of no-cost, open source software available to help produce your podcasts.

This ranges from free editing software (‘Audacity’ is the gold standard; available at http://bit.ly/90H9M and you’ll need the MP3 library plug-in – see http://bit.ly/Gj3on) to free sound effects and free ‘podsafe’ (royalty-free, copyright allows for commercial use) music which can be edited for introductory and exit theme music (try http://www.musicalley.com/).

Examples of Canadian business podcasts – Donna Papacosta

Podcast producer and consultant Donna Papacosta[4] is working with a small agency on a series of podcasts for small business. The end client is a national Canadian retailer of business supplies. The idea is to create a hub for small business, and these podcasts are part of the content. You can see it at http://bit.ly/bjqk4W.

Donna is also working with a company in the life sciences sector called Clearstone Labs, producing interviews with its leadership. You can see the work at http://bit.ly/doWSf1.

Additionally, Donna produced pre-conference podcasts for the Canadian Society of Professional Event Planners and created audio content at their national conference; you can see her work at http://canspep.ca.

Why produce a podcast?

Let’s think about how people process information. Some have as their chosen method the written word; for them books and print are the medium of choice for gathering data and sorting it into information.

Others like to use their hands; drawing, manipulating manually, getting ‘dirt under their fingernails’ works best for them.

But there’s a third type, the type that podcasts are ideal for: those whose most preferred medium for information delivery is aural. For them (and this includes me), the aural mode can be a delight; content can be delivered without images but create compelling ones in the mind’s eye; sensations and emotions can be tapped by merely a voice or a sound effect.

That is the beauty of podcasting: a ‘soundscape’ can be created which transports the listener away from whatever their current location is to a new location of your creation, be it real or fantasy.

Imagine creating a podcast series where members of staff are interviewed about their jobs and in the background are the sounds of their workplace, rather than the sterile silence of a recording studio. It helps place the listener into the environment and creates a compelling connection.

Reasons not to produce a podcast

As good a communication vehicle as a podcast is, it is equally important that you don’t waste time and effort (and the goodwill of your in-house evangelists) on a vehicle that won't run. Here are three good reasons why you shouldn't podcast:

- The message does not lend itself to podcasting. The best podcasts are very conversational in tone, akin to a conversation among peers; some business issues may not lend themselves to informal, conversational presentation.
- There's no audience for your podcast. There's no doubt that the proliferation of playback equipment for podcasts has continued almost unchecked since the introduction of the iPod. Today we have a dizzying array of platforms on which to play audio files. But your target audience just may be one that doesn't have a smartphone, iPod or an iPhone; or even a computer.
- Your message requires intense focus and is multi-layered. If your message is, say, about the various elements of a strategic initiative and it requires attentive focus, podcasting is not the right medium. Remember, podcasts can be listened to while doing something else (driving, walking the dog, washing up); asking someone to concentrate fully on what they are hearing means that they might be missing vital information they need from other sources (other cars, for example).

Reasons to produce a podcast

Podcasts are a great social media tool for:

- Interviews;
- Recruitment;
- Speeches;
- Company news;
- Enhancing brand and product recognition;
- Presentations;
- Issues management/PR (such as corporate responsibility, environmental issues, investor relations);
- Team/product updates; and
- Novelty!

Each of the above facets of corporate life can be enhanced and promoted through podcasts, to the benefit of both the organisation and the listener. For example, a 15 minute weekly podcast with interviews with key members of the R&D community within the organisation can be invaluable to investment managers and give your organisation considerable advantage over those who don't pursue such a novel approach. Even investment managers have enough spare time to listen to a 15 minute podcast if it affects their performance!

Imagine being able to give potential employees a taste of the company culture by listening to 'Day in the Life of…' podcasts and interviews with staff members of all ranks – potential employees could self-select their next steps, removing themselves from the recruitment process if they felt that the culture wasn't right for them (saving you otherwise wasted time interviewing them), or else motivate them to continue with the recruitment process because the culture felt like a 'good fit' with their own values and ideals (giving you a more motivated, more engaged potential employee).

Five golden rules for podcasting

Whether the podcast is for personal purposes or for corporate use, there are five golden rules to successful podcasting:

Understand it

Understand the medium of podcasting by listening to as many podcasts as you can (I suggest a minimum of ten), from a wide cross-section of iTunes categories. There are

Section	Time	Content
Standard introductory music	____ seconds	Theme music
Introduction	____ seconds or minutes	e.g. 'It's [date] and this is the first episode of [name of podcast].' Describe nature and focus of podcast and this episode.
Audio transition	____ seconds	Ascending scale sound fx
Topic 1: [name]	____ minutes	Bullet points to be covered
Audio transition	____ seconds	Ascending scale sound fx
Topic 2: [name]	____ minutes	Bullet points to be covered
Call to action (listeners to call a toll-free number, or leave comments and ideas for next podcast, etc.)	____ minutes	Bullet points to be covered
Conclusion	____ seconds or minutes	Let listeners know when the next podcast will be published/ broadcast
Total time	____ minutes	

Table 1: A possible template for a podcast

a lot of different ways of putting a podcast together and it is only by listening to a wide cross-section that you will be exposed to them, leading you to an informed choice about the right format for your podcast.

Script/template it

By script I don't mean write out a word-for-word script – nothing will kill the conversational nature of your podcast quicker than someone reading something out and trying to pretend they are saying it 'off the cuff'. It is a rare breed of communicator that can take written material and make it sound like they are just extemporising; usually these professionals understandably charge a large sum of money for their considerable talents. But you should not look to create something so slick and polished, so tightly corseted by words that it is scripted to death. Instead create bullet points on what you want to speak about – that way you don't wander off track, but still allow free-range thoughts to enter the mind and mouth. Similarly, with template, use the format you decided upon in Rule 1 to create a template (for example, see Table 1) that you stick to for all the episodes or editions, creating continuity for the listener.

Polish it

Use editing software like Audacity to edit out the 'ums' and 'ahs', the long pauses where guests thought about their answers, the bits where you made a mistake. Then add in sound effects (if desired) as well as introductory and exit (outro) theme music and any voice overs (for example, 'Leave comments about this podcast by e-mailing us at podcast-at-xyz-corp-dot-com, or by calling our toll-free number 123-456-789').

Diary it

Putting together a podcast takes time – not just the editing and recording, but also getting time with other people if you are interviewing them (you can count on interviews having to be rescheduled). Mark dates and times in your diary when work must be completed by if a podcast is to be released on schedule, plus let the publishing schedule be released to the public (it helps motivate you to stay on top of things).

Publish and trumpet it

Publish it via a server that allows for RSS feeds to be created, either your own company server or a third party hosting platform (there is one specifically designed for podcasts I strongly recommend called libsyn.com). Then let the world know you have a podcast – talk about it on every e-mail signature, on every letterhead, on every brochure, on every invoice, etc. You don't have to write an essay, but a simple two-three line teaser can do (ask your marketing or PR folks for some ideas).

A final word about podcasting

Never forget that podcasting is an intimate medium (after all, you are right inside someone's ears and potentially shaping their mind's eye). Don't try to 'hard sell' inside your podcast. Instead, deliver valuable information that, unless it's a podcast about product updates, is not product focused. Always deliver what the listener wants to hear, not what you want to say.

Extra resources on podcasting

I cannot recommend highly enough an excellent manual on podcasting, *How to Do Everything with Podcasting* by Shel Holtz and Neville Hobson (McGraw Hill/ Osborne; http://amzn.to/ai35m3). If you only purchase one resource on podcasting, *this* is the one to get.

Also, there is the highly valuable information in, *Promoting Your Podcast* by Jason Van Orden (Larstan Publishing; http://amzn.to/ak3mZ6).

At the end of the day the best resource for podcasting is your own pair of ears. The more podcasts you listen to from various categories on iTunes, the more you will pick up the nuances of podcasting and make your own podcast an audience winner.

Video

Video may have killed the radio star, as Buggles sang in the 1980s (those halcyon days of wild hair, massive spectacles and shoulder pads the same size as those of a grid iron quarterback), but video has certainly helped all manner of organisation reach new audiences for good effect.

Most major organisations have YouTube channels, where they show everything from product 'how to' videos to recruitment-focused interviews with staff members (which can give clues as to the culture of the organisation and help position it as a 'great place to work').

Videos can be used to display:

- Corporate presentations (for example, the CEO's annual report to shareholders);
- Product 'how to's;
- Service 'how to's (including 'how to get that broken light bulb out of your dashboard without breaking the fascia', as I recently experienced and wished the car manufacturer had a video of on their site);
- Employee induction;
- Crowd-sourced/crowd accelerated innovation (discussed in the following section)
- Interviews with favourite customers and fans (at, for example, a trade show);
- The sense of humour of the organisation and its leadership (which might not otherwise fare well on traditional media channels);

- Advertising and marketing material produced at a fraction of the cost of traditional advertising;
- Re-purposed expensive television or cinema advertising; and
- Interviews with industry leaders (for example, at an industry event or trade show).

These are just some of the uses; the limits are only the imagination of the organisation and its employees (asking your employees to come up with their views on the organisation or particular products or services can uncover a motherload of great content that will spread virally throughout the organisation and beyond).

Crowd-accelerated innovation

Wired magazine founder Chris Anderson's recent talk at TED in Oxford[5] highlighted the power of the video platform to drive innovation.

The idea of the lone genius coming up with a Eureka! moment is a myth; all innovation is the result of painstaking trial and error combined with a passion for the end goal.

What Chris suggests is that by letting light shine on the trials and errors allows fellow passionate individuals and groups to contribute to the pool of knowledge, thereby accelerating knowledge growth. The tool to create the light is, Chris suggests, video, which enjoys phenomenal reach as bandwidth improves around the globe, including on mobile phones (see Table 2). Australia boasts that four out of five internet users watch online video via either their computer or their mobile platform (iPhone, smartphone, iPad, *inter alia*), averaging 90 videos per month.[6]

Using an example of a shanty town in Africa as well as examples from various hobbies, Chris posited that by exposing the practices undertaken by organisations of all types to the light of video – a light that allows others to see, replicate, improve upon and innovate on top of – the organisation is the one that stands to benefit.

Similar in concept to Alumni groups where the organisation aims to tap into the experience and expertise of former employees, here the light of video allows the whole world to accelerate innovation.

Most assuredly, it will take an organisation with a strong sense of self and

Mobile TV/Video Consumption by European Country July 2010 vs July 2009 (3 month Avg) Total EU5 (UK, DE, FR, ES and IT), Age 13+ Source: comScore MobiLens			
	Mobile subscribers who watched TV/Video on mobile phone ever in month (000)		
	July 2009	July 2010	Per cent change
EU5	7,292	12,122	66 per cent
UK	1,553	2,712	75 per cent
Italy	1,750	2,711	55 per cent
France	1,684	2,570	53 per cent
Germany	1,416	2,438	72 per cent
Spain	890	1,691	90 per cent

Table 2: Mobile TV/Video consumption by European Country. © 2010 comScore Inc. [http://bit.ly/c5Ylnn]

a willingness to open itself up to the outside world (including of course, competitors) to take advantage of such possibilities. But once industry-leading organisations begin the process of opening up and others see the benefits that such opening up brings, more and more organisations will open their front door in order to drive innovation via crowd-sourcing.

No, I don't expect every organisation that reads this report to immediately open its doors to the world. But be very aware that such a move will be increasingly popular over the next five years, by which time those who haven't opened their doors to expose at least some of their processes and procedures, to expose some of their technologies and tools, will be at a significant competitive disadvantage.

Tools of the trade

Video production for television and cinema is an expensive budget item. Video production for online consumption can cost a fraction of that.

For example, the mobile phone-sized camcorder by Cisco, the Flip mino, as well as its main rival the Kodak zi8, are now firmly entrenched tools used by business communicators at US trade shows and internally in their organisations.

Figure 5: The Flip mino by Cisco

Figure 6: The Kodak zi8

I use either the Flip mino or a Canon camcorder with plug-in mic capability (the Legria FS22) and a Sony lapel/lavalier condenser microphone and amplifier. Neither camera is expensive and both produce high quality, near HD video.

Figure 7: Canon Legria FS22

Editing the video

There are plenty of tools; no-cost, low-cost and high-cost that allow for easy editing.

In the no-cost camp there are the tools that come free with Windows Vista/7 PCs and laptops, Windows Movie Maker. For Macs there is the free and excellent iMovie.

I have used Windows Movie Maker to edit over 30 of my own vidcasts and a number of videos for clients. It is an excellent tool with which to create compelling videos, allowing for the addition of sound effects, music and additional imagery (in a very basic way). I'm not a 'Mac person' so I can't comment on iMovie but friends of mine with Macs swear by its ease of use and great output.

In the low-cost camp there are numerous tools, the arguable leaders of which are Adobe's Premiere Elements and my personal favourite, Corel's Video Studio Pro. These tools allow for more sophisticated video editing, including video on video, vertical scrolling text on video and more transition effects (such as more sophisticated cross fades) than the free tools offer.

In the high-cost camp there is an undisputed champion: Adobe's Premiere Pro with broadcast-quality output and effects, plus the ability to add plug-in effects from both Adobe and third-party suppliers. But Premiere Pro demands a lot of computer processing power and is only available (as I write this) for computers with 64-bit processors. No doubt someone in the organisation's media team would love to be able to play with software as powerful as this, but the learning curve is steep in order to get the most out of it and the benefits over the low-level software are minimal in a good editor's hands (and it is the skill and craft of the editor that creates the compelling output, not the tool).

Five golden rules for video

In sync with its audio-only sister podcasting, there are five golden rules that will enable any organisation to capitalise and make best use of video:

Understand it

Watch videos from other organisations large and small, for-profit and not-for-profit. Build up your own internal knowledge base or library of videos that for some reason resonate with you and similarly a library of those that don't resonate. Think about why those videos do or do not work for you.

Script/template it

As with podcasting, create a bullet-point list of topics you wish to cover in each video (even if it's an interview with a client or a senior executive). The bullet points will help you stay on target and not meander off down intriguing side paths (they are best left for another day and a follow-up interview, perhaps). Create an editing template in advance so that the person on-camera or conducting the interview can record their video introductions and farewells.

Polish it

Using the editing template mentioned above, edit your video to remove false starts, add in transitions if required, sound effects if required, music and so on.

Diary it

My own experience is that it takes an hour to create a good blog post, four hours to create a five minute podcast and a whole day to create and edit a five minute video. Therefore you need to schedule the shooting time and location(s), the editing, access to interview subjects, and so on. You can rely on Murphy's Law to throw your tightly-packed schedule into disarray, so give yourself plenty of spare room around your recording and editing milestones to be able to cater for last-minute changes.

Publish it

If the video is one of a series of videos to be released on a regular basis, let your audience know that you will be releasing others on set dates. If your video is a one-off then let your audiences know. Either way, let the world know in as many ways as possible that you have just posted a new video online: e-mail signatures, e-mail mailing lists, intranet login screen messages, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn status updates –

even calling key clients and letting them know over the phone.

Anything you can do I can do better

As has been seen with the United Breaks Guitars campaign,[7] the sleepy Comcast employee[8] and many others, videos have a powerful way of getting their message across and being rapidly shared by millions across the world – to a company's detriment.

Therefore it makes sense to have a channel in place that can deal with false rumours, inaccurate fact-forwarding and plain animosity as quickly as possible. In today's online timeframe, sometimes even 24 hours is 23 hours too slow. Better to have someone credible appearing on the company's behalf as soon as possible than let the company appear to be lead-footed.

Wikis

Wiki is a Hawaiian word for 'fast'. Wikipedia (itself a wiki) describes a wiki as:

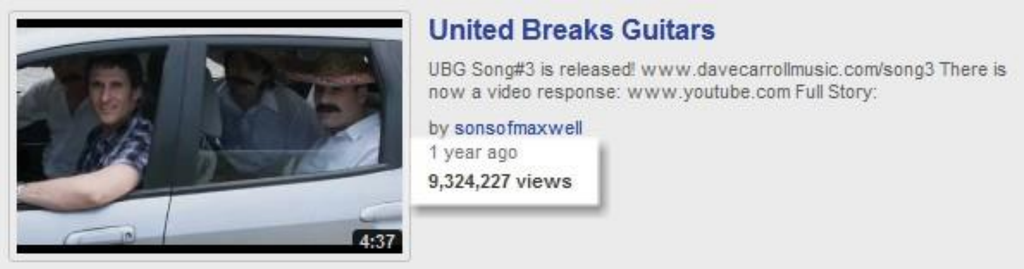
'A website that allows the easy creation and editing of any number of interlinked web pages via a web browser using a simplified markup language or a WYSIWYG text editor. Wikis are typically powered by wiki software and are often used to create collaborative wiki websites, to power community websites, for personal note taking, in corporate intranets and in knowledge management systems.'

Wikis may exist to serve a specific purpose and in such cases, users use their editorial rights to remove material that is considered 'off topic'. Such is the case of the collaborative encyclopedia Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki - cite_note-Britannica-1. In contrast, open purpose wikis accept content without firm rules as to how the content should be organised.

Ward Cunningham, the developer of the first wiki software, WikiWikiWeb, originally described it as "the simplest online database that could possibly work".

Wikis in the work context

In essence, a wiki allows a project team to agree a common set of documents, terms, details and so on, without the endless to-ing and fro-ing of e-mails and without the rapidly confusing visual mess that a Word



United Breaks Guitars

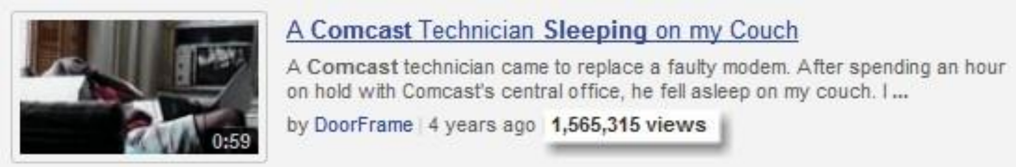
UBG Song#3 is released! www.davecarrollmusic.com/song3 There is now a video response: www.youtube.com Full Story:

by sonsofmaxwell

1 year ago

9,324,227 views

Figure 8: The United Breaks Guitars video campaign on YouTube. United Airlines' share price lost US$880m as a result of the campaign, enough to buy the angry protagonist plenty of guitars. All he originally wanted was an apology and his guitar repaired.



A Comcast Technician Sleeping on my Couch

A Comcast technician came to replace a faulty modem. After spending an hour on hold with Comcast's central office, he fell asleep on my couch. I ...

by DoorFrame | 4 years ago 1,565,315 views

Figure 9: The Comcast Technician Asleep on my Couch video on YouTube.

document descends into after more than two alterations by two different collaborators.

Wikis solve office politics problems

Wikis also help get office politics out in the open and dealt with so that the *real* work can get done.

Consider this: your project entails input from a formally-titled business communicator, a lawyer, a project manager, a marketer, an inventory manager, a product manager and a financial gatekeeper.

Now, your experience may differ (‘your mileage may vary’ as my North American colleagues delightfully say), but in my 25-plus years of business communication I have yet to meet a lawyer who didn’t think that *their* command of the spoken and/ or written word was superior to most (if not all) of the other project team members. Thus their belief that *theirs* should be the final wording, as it is the clearest, most concise and logical, while still defending the company against any risk.

Equally, I have yet to meet *any* member of a team who didn’t believe that *their* principal concern was not worthy of a top three spot of concerns that the project *must* address.

So every time a draft document was circulated for comment, back would spin conflicting viewpoints and emphases.

Having spent far too many years lost down the rabbit hole of piecing together paragraphs of conflicting information and dealing with resultantly upset egos, I can assure you that a wiki allows the egotists to ‘fight it out’ in public as documents and pages go through their various iterations. If one particular team member becomes too insistent on their point of view, despite comments and revisions from others, the team can point this out to them, an action that usually very quickly modifies over-exuberant behaviour.

Should the team member continue to insist on their point of view being the dominant, resulting in unnecessary delays to the project and increasing disharmony, the project manager can have a quiet word in their ear, or escalate the issue higher up the management chain for adjudication.

Irrespective of harmony or disharmony, the group always works from the one web page to shape and agree on a final version. Each section or sub-section of a document, report or project can be a standalone web page, editable by only one person

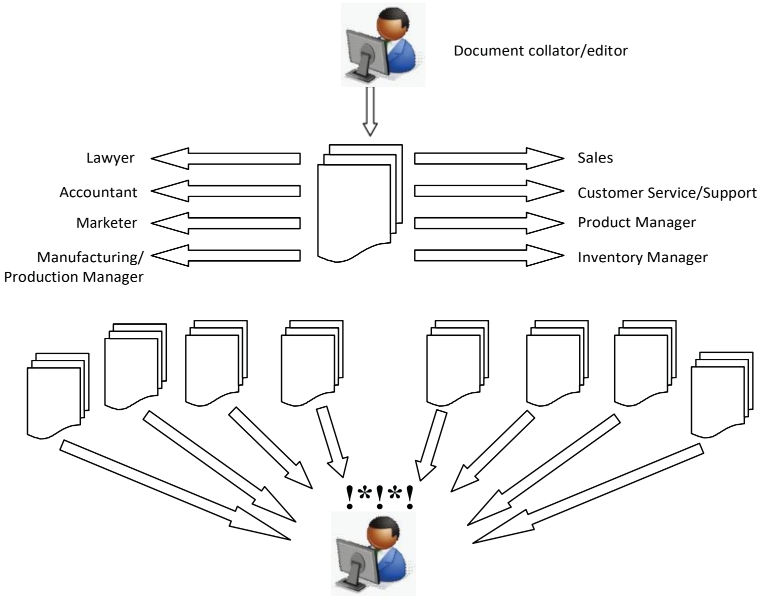


Figure 10: A wiki can help filter office politics for successful project collaboration

at a time (to avoid any data conflicts) and with a toolbar that offers the standard word processing options such as bold, italic, heading and sub-heading, add a link, add an image and so on.

When a page has been agreed and finalised, a simple copy-and-paste can take it from the wiki into a more formal document created within a word processor or desktop publishing application. Any stylistic variations can be accommodated by the style sheet underpinning the word processor or document layout tool (Word, Illustrator, etc.).

Wikis have taken off within the large organisation, particularly among knowledge management teams who leverage the power of the wiki in order to shorten project design and delivery time.

Case studies: Examples of the uses of a wiki

Design Commission

An award winning design firm based out of Seattle and with prestigious clientele including the likes of Sony and Corbis was looking for an effective solution for electronic collaboration. Design Commission chose to evaluate PbWiki, a Wiki collaboration tool for organising information. The flexibility and openness of PbWiki proved to be the perfect solution for Design Commission’s needs. It made PbWiki a part of team’s workflow and used it for recording notes from meetings, repository of credentials for software, planning and managing projects and storing staff, partner and vendor information. Full case study: http://bit.ly/b6hCyN.

BT

Took up a liberalisation project to ensure that all its employees can access social media sites. BT looks at social media as a way to tranform the way employees interact with the company, with each other and with partners, suppliers and customers. It launched a Facebook group and nearly 4,000 employees joined the group voluntarily. Social media tools were introduced on the company intranet. ‘MyPages’, an intranet wiki, was a huge hit. Social media helped transform BT’s internal communication system and ensured greater accountability among employees. Full case study: http://bit.ly/98zmk5

While most social media campaigns tend to be developed from a marketing communications point of view, the potential reach for collaborative and sharable tools goes much deeper. Enterprise 2.0 case studies may be rarer, but they can have fundamental implications for business. In an age where baby boomers are retiring, and taking their years of experience with them, solutions that help share and preserve at least some of that knowledge in-house are worth exploring.

Dr Bruce Ferguson

A lightbulb moment happened for Toronto’s Dr. Bruce Ferguson [http://bit.ly/cDtxET] while reading Don Tapscott’s and Anthony Williams’ excellent book *Wikinomics* [http://amzn.to/cmzl7k]. He connected the dots and realised that a collaborative space could be of great value to the community of doctors working with The Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS): a rating scale, which assesses a youth’s degree of impairment in day-to-day functioning due to emotional, behavioral, psychological, psychiatric, or substance use problems. CAFAS is used to determine whether kids improve as a result of mental health service.

Working with Socialtext, this doctor from The Hospital for Sick Children developed a space where physicians could access resources and share best practices. They also used it to develop events and even to co-author a book. A closed space, accessible by invitation only, the CafasinOntario Wiki [cafasinontario.ca] remains an active collaborative space, almost two years after its launch. At the time the case study was written, there were 'over 400 members in Socialtext CAFAS workspace, with around 25 per cent actively participating during any given week'.

A study conducted to measure user satisfaction with regards to 'Communities of Practice' compared physicians who accessed the CafasinOntario Wiki with those who did not. CafasinOntario Wiki users reported higher levels of practice change, greater CAFAS knowledge, and greater satisfaction with CAFAS implementation supports. Not only did they feel their learning curve had been accelerated thanks to the wiki, they felt more comfortable with the transition. Full case study: http://bit.ly/c5veKb. There are lessons in this case study for human resources, training and management.

Wiki vendors

There are scores of wiki vendors, from those that install on the company's servers to those that are hosted on third-party servers.

One of the best resources I have found for determining which type is best for your organisation is to be found at wikimatrix.org. After answering a few simple questions a list of recommendations are given, all of which are reputable.

Wiki reading resources

I cannot recommend these two books highly enough:

- *Wikinomics: How mass collaboration changes everything* by Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams, 2006, London: Atlantic Books [http://amzn.to/cmzl7k]; and
- *Wikipatterns: A practical guide to improving productivity and collaboration in your organization* by Stewart Mader, 2008, Indianapolis: Wiley [http://amzn.to/aFbIpA].

I personally wouldn't begin to roll-out a wiki without having extensively read both, because the former will give you the reasons why a wiki should be a part of your organisation's internal project and communication platform and the latter will give you the nuts-and-bolts insights into the 'how' questions.

Additionally, while Tapscott's and Williams' book reads a bit too much like a hype-filled, consultant-speak treatise (but still invaluable, none the less), Mader's book is down-to-earth and written in the kind of language anyone can follow and understand. If you had to buy just one, I'd plump for Mader's.

Conclusion

There is no shortage of tools with which to engage target audiences, but as discussed in Chapter 2 the best tool in the world is useless if the audience isn't there to receive the message.

Similarly, the best tools in the world are useless if the organisation is not prepared to be able to use them to best advantage.

In this new communication landscape, trust and credibility can only be built up over time, so the savvy organisation will move to bring these powerful tools to bear for them as soon as possible ONCE the strategic questions of Chapter 2 have been answered.

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Chapter 8: The final word

SOCIAL MEDIA is here to stay – at least until the next communication evolution arrives, which will be something built on the shoulders of what has come before.

If social media seems new and scary now, it is because the democratisation of the publishing process has brought with it voices wise and foolish, calming and angry.

As Charles Darwin said, "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but those most adaptive to change."

We are firmly in another era of change, where the standards that we thought were rock-solid are now wobbling and crumbling before our eyes. Behaviours that were unthinkable a decade ago are now firmly entrenched. Technologies that were the stuff of science fiction are now commonplace. Strange new words enter our lexicon on an almost daily basis. Each month brings a new brace of tools with which to engage with the outside world.

But if we as individuals don't make the effort to keep up, we will be overtaken by those who have taken the time and effort to ensure their employment security. If we don't embrace these new communication tools then we leave ourselves, our managers and our organisations at risk of being irrelevant, of being a 'dinosaur'.

I cannot stress enough that the communication landscape has fundamentally and irrevocably changed. It is up to organisations and the individuals that make them work to look critically at the changes, decide what path to take (remember, you don't have to take on everything at once; Rome wasn't built in a day) and step forward with a confident smile. Much like your very first day at work: while it was all scary and new, no-one endlessly shouted at you and no-one set out to deliberately trip you up.

The inhabitants of the social media landscape are much the same: no-one except a tiny number of rabid individuals is going to deliberately pick a fight; no-one except the rabids and trolls are going to wish you ill. You will find just about everyone will help you if you ask them politely and respectfully. Just about everyone you come into contact with will offer assistance, help you succeed, show you the ropes and guide you around the potholes – a bit better than in real life, in fact.

In this report you have discovered what social media is and thought about why it is important that businesses embrace it. You have considered the very first thing that should be considered when thinking about engaging in the social media landscape; your strategy and you've looked at examples of other organisations' strategies, as well as discovered a few places to go online where you can find more.

With probably the vast majority of your employees already engaging in one form or another with social media, you've looked at what sort of social media policy your own organisation should have and where online you can go to find more examples than I've provided here.

Social media introduces a cultural shift in an organisation, be under no illusion. Truth, trust, transparency and accountability, the foundations on which the social media world is built, are now expected of organisations and governments. So, you have looked at how to change traditional organisational mindsets as well as considered the impact of changing the way a company communicates, both to and with the outside world and to and among its employees.

You've also gained insight into how to best manage social media within your organisation – the costs, the risks, the ownership and the all-important ROI question. Yes, there is an ROI which you can take back to the CFO.

Lastly, you've looked at six of the major social media channels: blogs, microblogs, social networks, podcasts, video and wikis, seeing for yourself that while they all have benefits, it is your social media strategy that will most accurately point you to the best tool that matches your needs. You also know that you can take comfort from the knowledge that you don't have to be across all channels at once; social media channels can be approached one at a time, each one made to work appropriately and then a new channel introduced.

You've done a lot of reading; now go forth and socialise.

Glossary

Blog A website that features regular, dated entries (as in a journal) using text, graphics, video and/or audio posted by an individual or small group of authors. Blogs come in countless varieties including news journalism, personal journals and musings on topical themes.

Blogosphere The term used to describe the totality of blogs on the internet and the conversations taking place within that sphere.

Blogroll A list of sites displayed in the sidebar of blog, showing who the blogger reads about regularly.

Bookmarking Saving the address of a website or item of content either in your browser or on a social bookmarking site like delicious.com. If you add tags, others can easily use your research too and the social bookmarking site becomes an enormous public library. If groups agree on the tags they will use, it makes collaborative research much easier.

Control Social networking is difficult to control because if people can't say something in one place they can blog or comment elsewhere. That can be challenging for hierarchical organisations used to centrally-managed websites.

Conversation Talking through blogging, commenting or contributing to forums is the currency of social networking.

Culture Social media only works well in a culture of openness where people are prepared to share. For that reason, commitment and attitude are as important as tools. Creative two-way communication and collaboration is unlikely to flourish in an organisation where the norm is top-down control. When people in that sort of culture talk about networking they may have a 'hub and spokes' model in mind, with some kind of centralised control.

Listening In the blogosphere, listening is the art of skimming RSS feeds to see what topics are bubbling up and also setting up searches that monitor when you or your organisation is mentioned.

Lurkers People who read but don't contribute or add comments to discussions. The 'ten per cent' rule-of-thumb suggests about ten per cent of people contribute new content to an online community, another ten percent comment and the rest lurk. However, this may not be a passive role because content read may spark interaction elsewhere.

Mashup A media product that combines and/or manipulates video, audio, text, images and/or designs from two or more sources to create a new work. For example, a political mashup video might combine news footage of candidate speeches with a pop song and some other video to create new commentary.

Podcast A digital media file, usually audio or video that can be played on a computer or portable media players (mp3 players, mobile phones) and is delivered by RSS subscription. Podcasters can post their creations to their blog, website or have it re-purposed (aka re-syndicated) on other websites.

Post An item/article on a blog or forum.

Presence Presence online has (at least) two aspects. One is whether you show up when someone does a search on your name. If not, it is no good pretending to be an online guru. The second is whether you use tools that show you are available for contact by instant messaging, voice-over-IP or other synchronous methods of communication.

Profiles The information you provide about yourself when signing up for a social networking site. As well as a picture and basic information, this may include your personal and business interests, a blurb about yourself and tags to help people search for like-minded people.

RSS Real Simple Syndication is a way to feed websites that publish frequently (such as blogs, news, podcasts) into your computer, website or portable media player (mp3 player, mobile phone). RSS makes it possible for people to keep up with their favourite websites in an automated manner that is easier than checking them manually. An RSS document, which is called a feed, web feed, or channel, contains either a summary of content from an associated website or the full text.

Sharing This is offering other people the use of your text, images, video, bookmarks or other content by adding tags and applying copyright licenses that encourage use of content. The most common tools for sharing are usually easily integrated into your website and those copyright licences can be hand-crafted at creativecommons.org.

Social media Social media integrate technology, social interaction and the construction of shared meanings and experiences from many different users. Social media users create content, share various perspectives, swap favourites, tell stories and make comments using words, pictures, video and audio. Unlike traditional media that use technologies as conduits to deliver meanings and experiences, social media focus on people’s interactions with each other and with media texts as shared experiences. Social media also provide people with venues for asserting and developing their identities, tastes and values through their media messages and interactions.

Social networking sites These sites allow users to join communities of people who share interests and activities, or to explore the interests and activities of others. Most sites allow users to create profiles or self-description pages, which often include pictures, video, music, text and a variety of design elements. Some educators encourage students to build profiles that include academic interests, achievements, representations and discussions and help students connect with groups interested in course content.

Tag A keyword that attaches to a text or media file on a website, which can be used to organise and find. Many websites feature a list of tags or a ‘tag cloud’, a graphical representation that emphasises by word size and bolding which are the most-used keywords used to organise the content.

Trackback Some blogs provide a facility for other bloggers to leave a calling card automatically, instead of commenting. Blogger A may write on blog A about an item on blogger B’s site and through the trackback facility leave a link on B’s site back to A. The collection of comments and trackbacks on a site facilitates conversations.

Troll A hurtful but possibly valuable ‘loser’ who, for whatever reason is both obsessed by and constantly annoyed with and/or deeply offended by everything you write on your blog. You may be able to stop them commenting on your blog, but you can’t ban them from commenting on other sites and pointing back to your blog; and you can’t ban them from posting things on their own blog that point back to your site.

Tweet A message of 140 characters or less that is sent out on Twitter.

User-generated content (UGC) Refers to text, audio, video and applications created by users who post their work to internet sites produced by others.

Virtual worlds Online places like Second Life where you can create a representation of yourself (an avatar) and socialise with other residents. Basic activity is free, but you can buy currency (using real money) in order to purchase land and trade with other residents. Second Life is being used by many voluntary, government and corporate organisations to run discussions, virtual events and fundraising.

Web 2.0 Refers to internet sites and applications that facilitate creativity, interaction, collaboration, participation and data-sharing between users and producers (as opposed to websites that simply display information). Web 2.0 emphasises community by incorporating wikis, social networking, tagging, RSS and other tools.

Widget Any tool or piece of code that can be embedded within a web page. It allows a user to display content from someone else’s website on his or her site.

Wiki A web page, or set of pages that can be edited collaboratively. The best known example is Wikipedia, an encyclopaedia created by thousands of contributors across the world. Once people have appropriate permissions (set by the wiki owner) they can create pages and/or add to and alter existing pages. Wikis are a good way for people to write a document together, instead of e-mailing files to and fro. You don’t have to use wikis for collaborative working; they can just be a quick and easy way of creating a website. Although wikis are easy to use, that doesn’t mean everyone in a group will commit to their use with similar enthusiasm.

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