

# CONG | REGATION

## Digital Media Unconference eBook

**“BLOG  
YOUR  
WAY IN”**

**November, 29th 2014  
Cong, Co Mayo**

[www.congregation.ie](http://www.congregation.ie)

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## Summary

Content, creativity, automation, the impact of digital cash through to digital video distribution were some of the topics presented, discussed and shared at this years' Congregation in Cong Co Mayo or #cong14. In its second year Congregation attracted over 50 people to the small west of Ireland village for a day of connecting, presenting, sharing and discussion.

Attendees travelled from counties all over Ireland and as far away as Italy. The divergent age profile, background and expertise expanded the original remit from social media to digital which was reflected in the 62 submissions on [www.congregation.ie](http://www.congregation.ie).

The pre-published blog submissions acted a catalyst for probing questions and ideas while some were very deliberate in their intent to prime a conversation that has continued beyond Congregation.

As organiser of #cong14 I had the distinct pleasure of reading each post multiple times, watching the onsite discussions and the social sharing and engagement that resulted.

**CONG REGATION**  
Saturday 29th November 2014. Cong. Mayo.



Producing a blog paper that would be published and debated in advance is a big ask for attendees but the result was 62 distinct, well considered and thought provoking submissions. I know from direct contact with all the authors that a lot of thought went into the topic selection, which was the most challenging aspect for many people, not to mention the many hours of follow on researching and scripting. I thank all the authors for their hard work as this diligence meant that on the day people's minds were clear to debate and discuss rather than focusing on one way 'megaphoning'.

November 28th is the provisional date for #cong15 and I am looking forward to an event bigger meeting of minds and personalities in Cong, Co Mayo.

## What is Congregation?

#cong13 in 2013 was a experiment to explore new ways of sharing knowledge and connecting people while testing the potential for a small village to host a conference that would normally be run in a city location.

Congregation is an 'unconference' and different in many ways. Tickets are earned via a blog post submission, the venues used are deliberately social outlets like a coffee shops/ books stores and finally everyone on the day presents. All these combined jar people out of the normal conference mentality and remove the barriers that prevent people connecting with each other. The simple fact that everyone had produced a blog post to get entry meant there was never a shortage of ice breakers and reasons to introduce oneself.



## Unconference but with Rules.

Congregation deliberately stretches the rules of engagement but has a flexible logistical backbone to ensure things run smoothly. Attendees were given a spreadsheet on arrival and allocated a number which guided them to different huddles (venues) at different times. This ensured that groups rotated to different locations with a refreshed composition of people in each venue. The one golden rule was 'No Self Promotion' which was self policed.



## Evolving 'Huddles'

A group of people gathering together in close proximity, actively listening and contributing best describes a 'Huddle', which is central to the Congregation. Each of the 7 venues hosted 4 one hour 'Huddles' during the day. Each had its own chairperson who guided proceedings. The attendees self selected two people to present at each 'huddle'. Officially 15 minutes was allocated to each presentation but in-built flexibility and group consensus meant that meaty topics were afforded more time. Some people chose to present formally with Powerpoint, some preferred a roundtable type chat with visuals and some took the form of naturally evolving conversations. The huddles rotated 4 times with 30 minutes networking time built in to allow people the opportunity to connect

and expand conversations. As the huddle composition was randomised and presenters were self selected there was no official schedule of who would speak at a particular time but the high degree of curiosity meant that Q&As and introductions bristled with insight.

## More than a day

One of the key aims of Congregation was to create meaningful and enjoyable 'face to face' encounters whilst leveraging the online element to enhance the day. This meant that submissions were posted in advance, shared through a wide variety of social channels, redistributed in personal communities and actively debated in advance of the day. In essence people got to know each other in advance, had a sneak view of what people would talk about and in many cases introduced themselves in advance. The eBook for 2013 and other initiatives stretched into the start of 2014 and the first submissions for 2014 were posted in September. From informal feedback people have built on relationships forged in #cong13 with collaborative projects and have reconnected at other events due to the shared Congregation experience. It was always the intention that the day should be a focal point but that the impact and connections should be felt throughout the year.



## Venues.

The choice of venue is a key ingredient in Congregation, as they help set the mood and calibrate people for active engagement. This year 7 venues were utilised, 5 of which were new from last year. A wide variety of locations were used and the personality and physical setting of each drove very different type engagement, presentation techniques and discussion. No one venue was similar and all were open to the public on the day, which ensured that the interactions were as close to normal conversations as possible.



### Crowes Nest/Ryan's Hotel

Ryans Hotel was the registration, finishing point and also hosted one of the huddles. As a functioning bar it was a natural location for people to group around tables and talk through their papers in one of the 'cosies'.

### Danagher's Hotel

Danaghers Hotel has a bar area and a separate restaurant area. #cong14 colonised the bright and airy separate restaurant area which saw the attendees gather around dining tables and chairs.

### Pat Cohan's – New for #cong14

This gastro bar/restaurant is the location for the famous fight scene featuring John Wayne in the Quiet Man and this was one of the huddle venues that opened up specially for Congregation. This meant that the attendees has the exclusive use of this very comfortable restaurant setting.

### Rare and Recent Book Store. New for #cong14

Rare and Recent Books have moved premises since last year but were a very welcoming host and an interesting venue. It was one of the more confined venues surrounded by books in an upstairs room. It was also one of the personal favourites of many of the attendees.



### The Quiet Cailin New for #cong14

The Quiet Cailin is a creative locally produced handcrafts and gifts store with a difference. Technically it supported the best IT in terms of WIFI and presentation options and although appeared small produced an airy creative setting with attendees gathered around in a circle.



### Hungry Monk New for #cong14

The Hungry Monk is a cafe set in an old cottage that opened specially for the day. Attendees were treated to their own personal barista and chose a round table format as they colonised the venue.



### Puddleducks New for #cong14

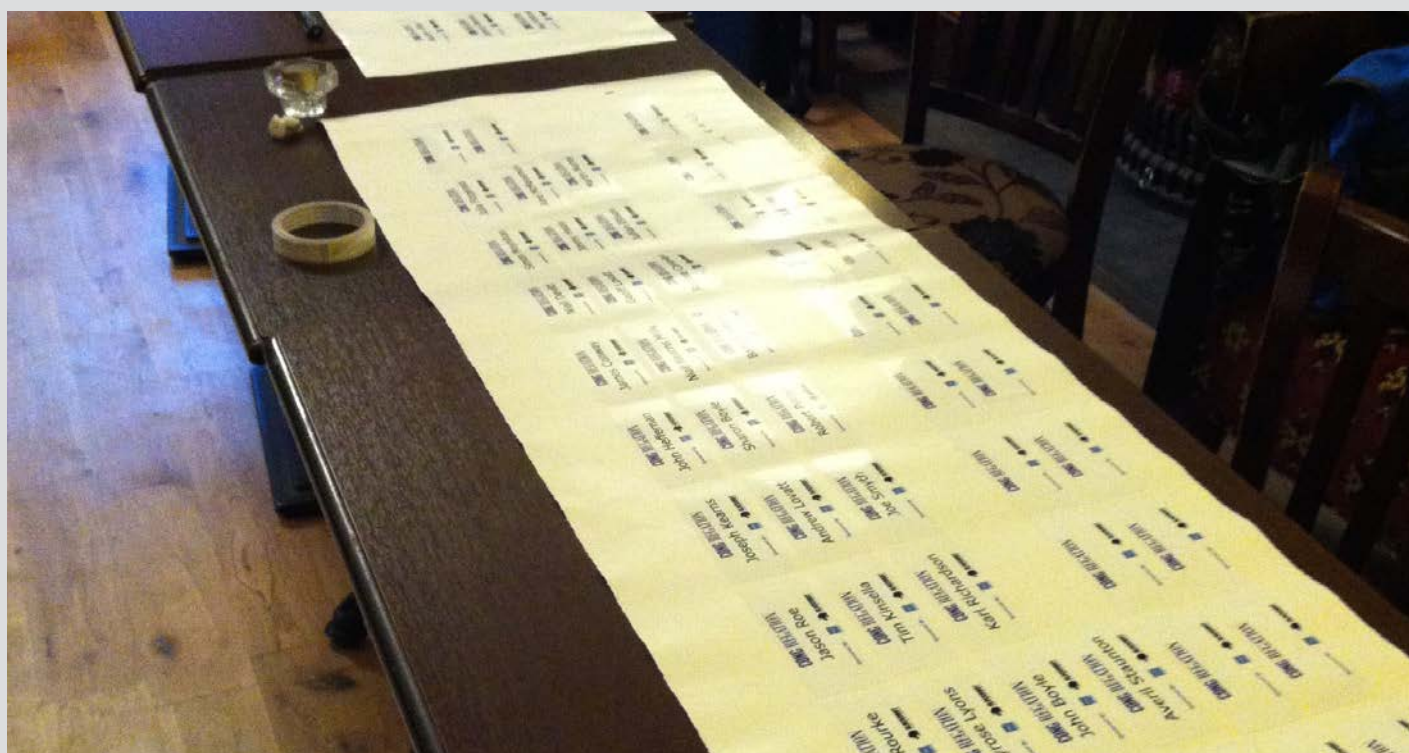
Puddleduck is a café/restaurant that only opened in 2014 and would not be out of place in a city location. Bare stone walls, comfortable couches and the background noise of a busy café meant that natural conversation emerged as people physically clustered together.



### Who Attended.

The submission papers in the following sections give exact details of the attendees whose profile varied widely. The background, interests and expertise varied greatly to produce a eclectic cauldron. Profile ranged from:

- Start up entrepreneurs,
- Digital specialists and agency owners,
- Academics,
- Business owners,
- Communications experts to accountants
- International consultants
- Journalists
- Film producers
- Teachers



## Quotes from #cong14

# #cong14 in Numbers



**40% Female Attendees**



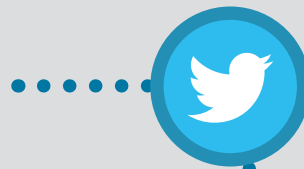
**60% Male Attendees**



**63 blog submissions**



**30 number of articles  
about #cong14**



**1,318 tweets using  
#cong14**

**675,256  
twitter posts  
reach**



**318  
twitter  
contributors**

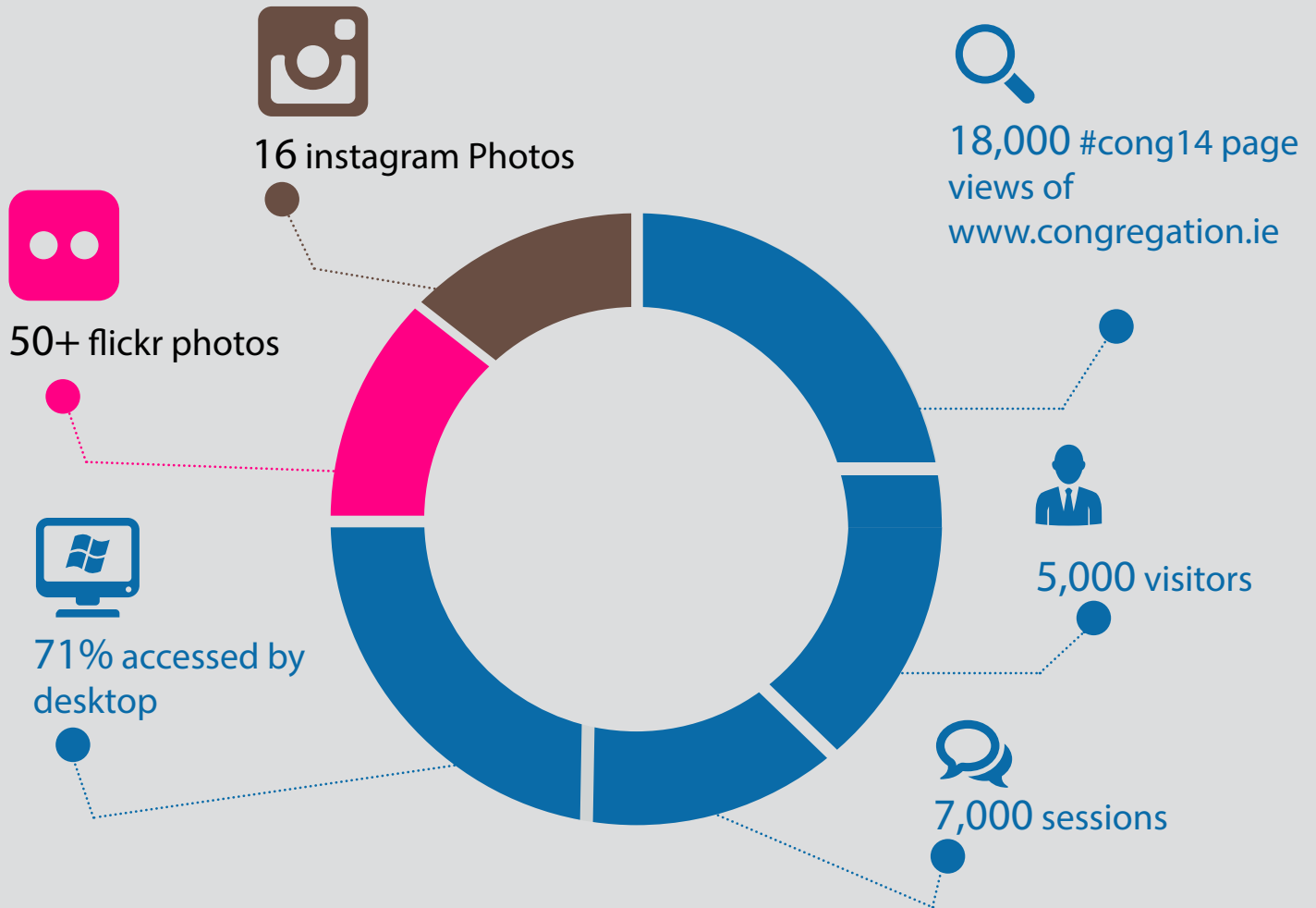


**50% number  
who accessed  
tweets via  
mobile**

**643 Retweets**

**530 Original  
tweets**

**141 replies**



## Social Flares from Blog Posts on [www.congregation.ie](http://www.congregation.ie)



Facebook 459



Twitter 607




Google + 137




LinkedIn 779

## Top Flares Per Post

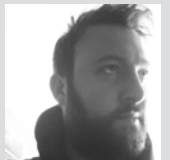
 **205** Three in a bed: the complex relationship between search, content and social media by Calvin Jones



 **41** Three in a bed: the complex relationship between search, content and social media by Calvin Jones



 **46** How Being Yourself and Empowering Employees can Reap Dividends on Social Media by Brian Gallagher



 **7** Don't let the gurus bring you down by MaryCarty



## Most Read Submissions

**01** The Rise of the Traditional Social Media by Eoin Kennedy



**02** Three in a bed: the complex relationship between search, content and social media by Calvin Jones



**03** Content Is King; Curation Is Queen by Marie Ennis-O'Connor



04

What's in my handbag: My Favourite WordPress Plugins by  
Enormous



05

We Need to Talk About Porn by Maryrose Lyons



06

Catching Wildfire: Staying unsettled from rec.humor.funny by  
Dermot Casey



07

Please like me on Facebook, Go on, Go On by Ailish Irvine



08

Does Anybody Care About Your Content? by Helen Cousins



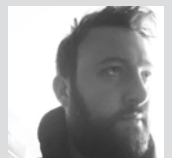
09

A Map of the Irish Twittersphere by Niall Kearns-Mills



10

How Being Yourself and Empowering Employees can Reap  
Dividends on Social Media by Brian Gallagher



## In attendance at #cong14

Audrey Elliot  
Kingsley Aikins  
Eoghan O'Neill  
Ailish Irvine  
Pauline Sargent  
Johnny Beirne  
Roseanne Smith  
Tom Murphy  
Eoin Mulvihill  
Mary McCarthy  
Amanda Web  
Ruairi Kavanagh  
Fiona Ashe  
Alastair McDermott  
Helena Deane  
Andrew McLindon  
Aisling Nelson  
Paul Killoran  
Bernie Goldbach  
Marie Boran  
Clodagh Barry  
Padraig McKeon  
Noreen Henry  
Sean McGarth  
Gianni Catalfamo  
Joy Redmond  
Dermot Casey  
Maryrose Lyons  
Tim Kinsella  
Andrew Lovatt  
Sharon Boyle  
Niall Kearns Mills

Jimmy Healy  
Geoff Lovatt  
Adam Finan  
Aine McManamon  
Simon Cocking  
Alan O'Rourke  
Jason Roe  
Joseph Kearns  
Karen McCarthy  
Mark Gavin  
Nicky Gogan  
Eoin Kennedy  
Barry Kennedy  
Robbie Canavan  
Martin Murray  
Jullian Ellison  
Auveen Curran  
Averil Staunton  
Padraig McKeon  
Emmet O'Donnell

### Chairs

Barry Kennedy  
Robbie Canavan  
Martin Murray  
Jullian Ellison  
Auveen Curran  
Averil Staunton  
Padraig McKeon  
Emmet O'Donnell  
Ruairi Kavanagh

## Acknowledgements.

Congregation could not have taken place without the generous financial backing of [MKC Communications](http://www.mkc.ie) (www.mkc.ie) SDC and [Blacknight Solutions](http://www.blacknight.com) (www.blacknight.com).

I would also like to thank The Public Relations Institute of Ireland (www.prii.ie) and the Irish Internet Association (www.iaa.ie) for their support of this initiative. The real heart of Congregation were the amazing posts and energetic attendees on the day who travelled far and wide to make #cong14 a truly memorable day.

I also owe gratitude to the chairs who expertly guided and moderated the sessions with professional ease and Sue Power of Power Design for her help in designing the posters.

A special thank you to all the venues in Cong who pulled out all stops with infectious enthusiasm and ensured day long supplies of tea/coffee and lunches for all attendees.

Finally my gratitude to Ashford Castle for the support and assistance.

I really hope you enjoy reading the submissions from #cong14 and put November, 28th 2015 in your diary for cong#15.

Eoin Kennedy

A portrait of a middle-aged man with a receding hairline, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored shirt. He is smiling slightly and has his arms crossed. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Traditional media consumption is in decline but its digital and social footprint continues to grow as does its influence.

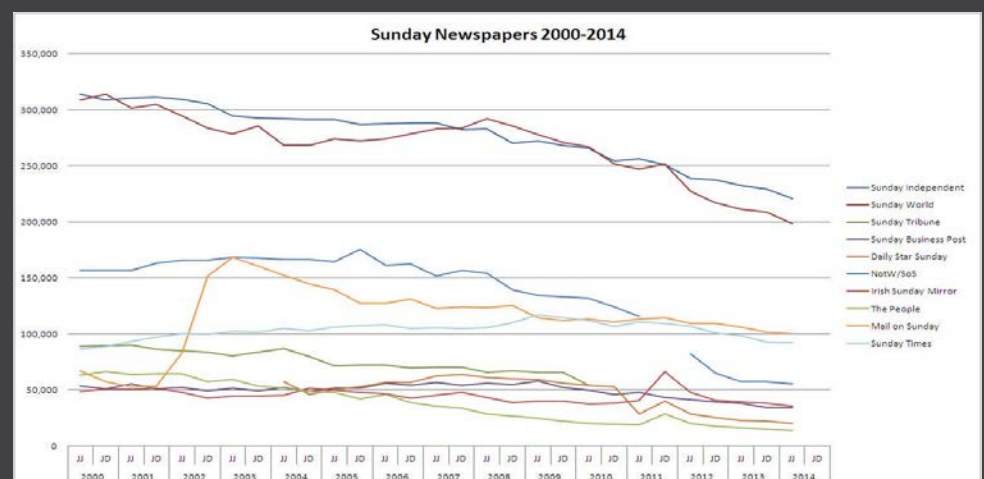
1. Average media Twitter account following is 8,451 versus average of 200.
2. Irish Independent has bigger following but Irish Times tweets more.
3. Irish Times has the highest Klout score followed by the Examiner.
4. Media outlets social audience top 430,000.

Eoin Kennedy is the founder of Congregation.ie, a startup entrepreneur and a freelance communications consultant living in the west of Ireland.

Eoin blogs on [www.eoinkennedy.ie](http://www.eoinkennedy.ie), can be found on twitter at [@eoink](https://twitter.com/eoink) or on [LinkedIn](#) or you can [email](#) him.



The Irish annual Joint National Readership Surveys (JNRR) and print circulation figures paint a dismal picture of the traditional print media in Ireland. Its sister broadcast figures are a big kinder but still the overall trend is a downwards one on their traditional channels.



Graphs courtesy of Conor Doyle [iLevel.ie](http://iLevel.ie)

It is easy to dismiss traditional media as a dying medium and while there is certainly a drop in sales of their physical product, news and journalism are probably more important and valuable than ever as we consume an endless supply of updates.

Next month marks the 20th anniversary of the [Irish Times' first online edition](#) and even as media outlets struggle with how to monetise online news the recorded numbers for their [digital presence](#) continues to grow.

One of the things that has remained constant is the influence of the media. The last few changes to Google's algorithms have recognised this favouring links from authoritative sites with deep content – something news websites have in abundance. Articles posted to the Irish Times website are automatically syndicated, feature strongly in Google News and are shared abundantly through social media.

Influence in the real world is hard to quantify. An informed journalist has the ears of a lot of people and access to vast contacts/experts in their 'little black books' but tracking the daily water cooler conversations on what the media report is next to impossible.

However the ever growing social media presence of journalists and media outlets gives a sense of this network and indication of their online influence.

I have had an [interest](#) in this aspect of the media landscape for quite some time and many of the big jumps in presence have only happened in the last few years – for example in November 2011 the [Irish Times Facebook page](#) had 4,000 followers – now its over 205,000 and is actively managed.

In September 2014 I took a deeper dive into the social media presence of the traditional media and individual journalists. I collated over 1,000 twitter accounts (individual and group owned ones) and with the help of google docs and Twitter APIs pulled some key data for analysis. There are lots of caviats in this research and I am viewing it as a starting point but hope to expand, automate and expose over time.

Here are some of the key findings

The Media on Twitter

Twitter has been recognised as a hot bed of media engagement for quite some time but the pure numbers show a very disproportionate size of network.

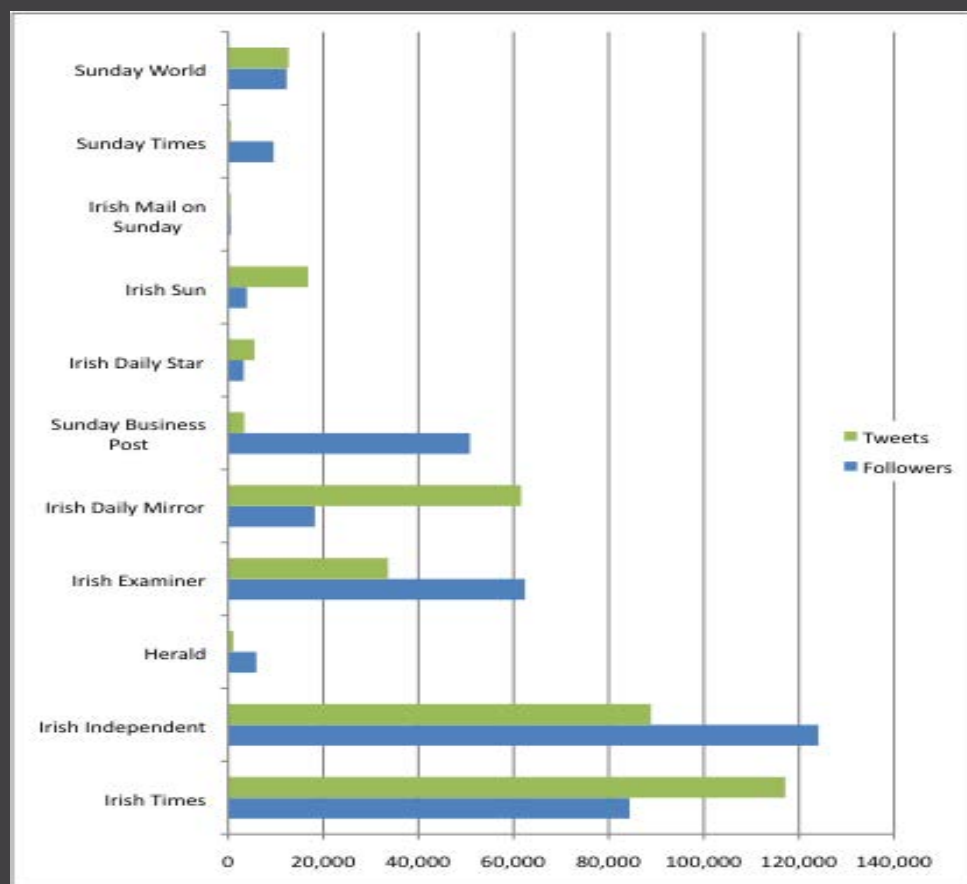
- 8,451: Average number of twitter followers. **61** to **208** Global Average.
- 1,303: Average number of people they follow. **117** Global Average.
- 10,790: Average number of tweets per account. **307** to - **600** Global Average.
- 340: Average amount of media (pictures/photos) they tweet.
- 337: Average amount of items they favourited.

Getting overall average Twitter figures is difficult but in almost every area the media are vastly ahead with very big networks and posting a long of content. In other words a lot of people are choosing to follow journalists on Twitter for news updates and the media are publishing original content and syndicating news on the platform.

Broadcast leads the charge with average followers of 13,056, followed by national media at 6,650 but national media post more tweets at 9,453 versus 7,613 for broadcast.

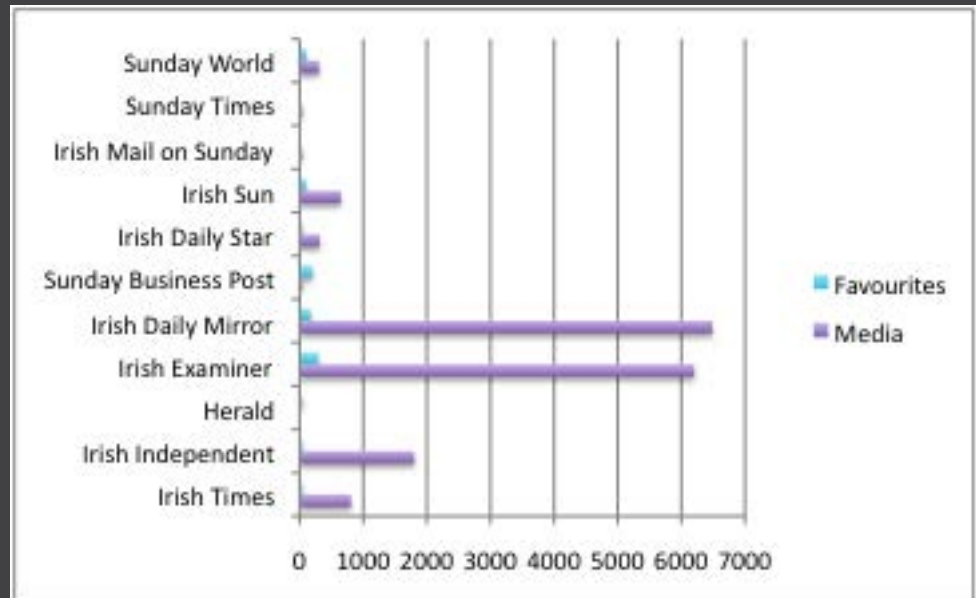
Print Media Outlet Comparison.

Making direct comparisons between media outlets on their overall social media presence is difficult as they vary widely and as I discover new accounts every day e.g. 160 RTE versus 89 Irish Times twitter accounts. Instead I used the main twitter and other social media accounts I could find per media outlet to get a snap shot idea of



their Twitter and overall social media footprint.

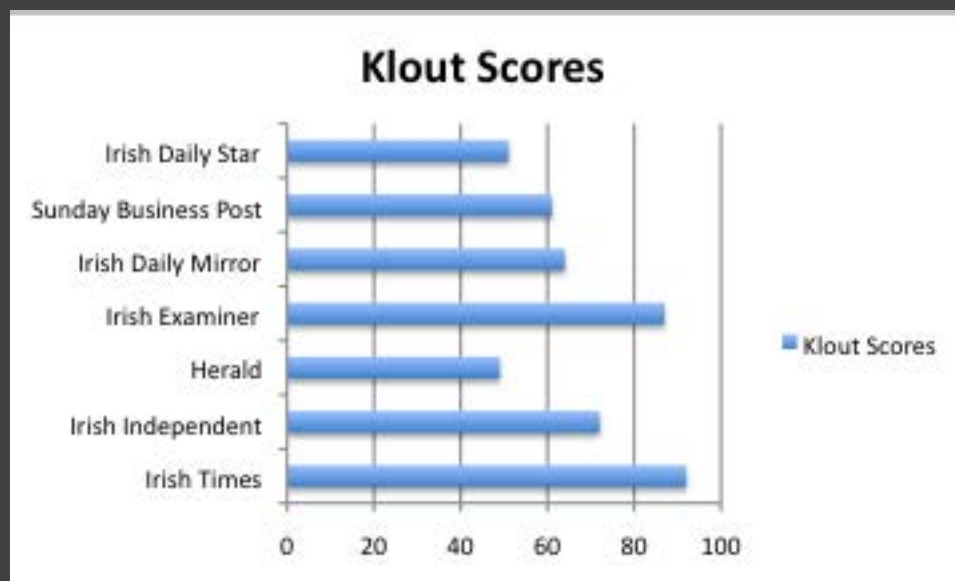
Main Twitter Accounts Snapshot:



Irish Independent wins on size of network but Irish Times wins on volume of content. The Irish Daily Mirror and the Irish Examiner win on the multimedia posted and the amount of content they favoured.

Social Score Klout:

Influencer is hard to gauge and although imperfect their Klout [www.klout.com](http://www.klout.com) scores



give a small indication their Twitter activity.

The Irish Times wins out at 92 but the Examiner is a close second at 87. This could be indicative of level of sharing, referencing and activity as I do not see a huge amount of engagement on these general account. The Klout score are I believe disproportionately high in general.

Overall social footprint.

In compiling this research I tried to find corresponding social accounts on Facebook, Google Plus, YouTube, SoundCloud, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Instagram and total them together. For most platforms the numbers were very small and more akin to experimental but there are some real surprises which impact on the overall figures.

## Surprises

276,000. Sunday World Facebook community.  
 107,000. Irish Independent Followers. Google+  
 6223. Irish Times. LinkedIn.  
 1490. Irish Examiner Subscribers. YouTube.  
 525. Irish Independent Followers. Instagram.

Outside of the media having a large social media presence and being influential, exact online trends will take more compiling and analysis. Some trends tend to be individual publication preference and are possibly also skill sets based. For example media who have reasonable SoundCloud accounts, also have active podcasts on their sites. There are also lot of anomalies. Although the Independent and Irish Times are producing a large volume of video content they tend not to post on YouTube but the Examiner does and has had a lot of success in **content going viral**.

Although clearly 'apples and oranges' when the social media audience are totted together they start to look more like inflated readership figures.  
 What are they doing on social media?

As a tool twitter appears to be a more comfortable home for a lot of journalists and each has their own preference in how they communication on the channel. However there are some key things ways it helps them in their daily lives including.

- Looking for leads and spokespeople.
- Pushing and discussing stories.
- Seeking feedback and crowdsourcing additional questions.
- Radio taking Twitter comments on air.
- Use tweets as basis for breaking stories.
- Getting guests on shows.
- Direct commentary on stories.

## Summary

Irish media - both individual journalists and main outlets have taken strongly to social media. This has allowed for rapid dissemination of stories and also opened up the media world to much closer engagement with the public. This is a welcome trend which is evidenced in the high number of followers and subscribers on social channels. Good journalism will always in high demand, journalists continue to wield influence but the problem remain on how to fund the expensive process of news gathering.

This piece of research started off very simply to look at the media twitter accounts but quickly morphed as I started to dig deeper. A few macro trends are robust but others are less so due to size and analysis.

I hope to build out more (e.g. broadcast analysis) in future and automate but the main aim of this is post is provoke debate at **Congregation** on November 29th 2014 in Cong, Mayo #Cong14.

## Content Is King; Curation Is Queen. #2

By Marie Ennis-O'Connor.



### Synopsis:

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Content curation is the process of finding and aggregating information about a specific topic, synthesizing it to be most relevant to your audience, and sharing it in an easily digestible manner. Curation can deliver many benefits including, establishing thought leadership and credibility, increasing visibility and driving social shares. While content curation sounds simple, there's a world of difference between simply curating content and doing it well. To excel curators must be discerning, discriminative, and selective in only sharing the best and most relevant content. When your audience discovers in you a trustworthy source of curated content, they will be more inclined to stay for allied offerings.

### 4 Takeaways:

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1. Content curation is the process of finding and aggregating information about a specific topic, synthesizing it to be most relevant to your audience, and sharing it in an easily digestible manner.

2. Curation can deliver many benefits including, establishing thought leadership and credibility, increasing visibility and driving social shares. While content curation sounds simple, there's a world of difference between simply curating content and doing it well. To excel curators must be discerning, discriminative, and selective in only sharing the best and most relevant content.

4. We're increasingly living in a world of information overload; by providing a clear, contextually relevant voice a good content curator will separate signal from noise.

"Those who succeed will propel the Internet forward as a marketplace of ideas, experiences, and products - a marketplace of content". Bill Gates.

Content is king, one of the most oft quoted, overused, and frequently misapplied phrases in Internet history, was first coined by Bill Gates in 1996. Despite the expectancy of that famous declaration eighteen years ago, many online publishers have struggled to fulfill its promise. As Ryan Skinner of global research and advisory firm Forrester Research, observed: "Marketers and agencies have invested large sums to create quality content, but – in many cases – it's not getting discovered. Audiences are neither finding nor sharing it. It's not going viral. It's not going anywhere."

It's clear that great content is not enough. So is it time to abandon the content is king mantra? Absolutely not; but it is time to bring the queen of content marketing into the equation and for that we must look to content curation.

What Is Content Curation? The internet is full of content curators, many of whom don't even realize that they are curating. Each time you re-tweet a memorable quote or statistic on Twitter, pin something useful on Pinterest, or share an insightful blog on Facebook, you are curating content. For a more formal definition, I define content curation as the process of finding and aggregating information about a specific topic, synthesizing it to be most relevant to your audience, and sharing it in an easily digestible manner.

### 7 Benefits of Content Curation

#### 1. Establishes thought leadership.

By adding your own perspective to curated content, you are connecting your brand's voice with the voices of industry experts. This helps you build your reputation in social spaces and grows your reputation as a thought leader in your field.

#### 2. Increases visibility and credibility.

Curating valuable content increases your visibility; by demonstrating that you rate the value of the content you share, you enhance your credibility among your audience.

#### 3. Saves time.

Creating original content is time and resource intensive. Curation helps you provide your audience with relevant, high quality information on a regular basis without sacrificing your time and resources (note: this doesn't mean you shouldn't still produce original content as you will see below).

#### 4. Develops Focus.

Content curation keeps you tuned into the latest developments in your industry.

#### 5. Boosts SEO.

Content that is curated from an original piece has the same ranking potential as fresh content. The rules of SEO still apply to curated content; ensure SEO value in what you

## About Marie Ennis-O'Connor

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Marie Ennis-O'Connor BA, MIAPR, holds an Honours degree in History from University College Dublin. She is a graduate of the Irish Academy of Public Relations and has worked in a variety of PR roles over the past decade. She writes a regular column demystifying social media and advocating best practice for health care professionals in Health Works Collective, an online community for thought leaders in international healthcare, which is part of Social Media Today.

## Contacting Marie.

---

You can follow Marie's updates on [Twitter](#).

curate and link back to insightful, quality websites.

6. Increases inbound links.

Publishing useful and relevant content on a regular basis is still the fastest way to earn links back to your website.

7. Drives social shares.

Curation can increase the volume of shares, re-tweets or blog links you get both from your audience and from the authors you curated.

So far, so simple?

While content curation sounds simple, there's a world of difference between simply curating content and doing it well. Read on to find out how you can excel at curation as part of your overall content strategy.

## 12 Golden Rules of Content Curation

#1 Determine your goals. Do you want to drive more traffic to your blog? Establish yourself as a thought leader in your field? Without clear goals from the start you won't be able to measure your success.

Actionable Marketing Tip: Read through the 7 benefits of content curation above. Which one of these is most aligned to your business goals? Write it down and keep it to the fore each time you curate content.

#2 Know Your Audience. Google's Avinash Kaushik, has stated that "content is anything that adds value to the reader's life." Choose content that is relevant and valuable to your audience.

Actionable Marketing Tip: If you are familiar with "buyer personas" for marketing campaigns, this process is similar. Do your research first to understand what your audience needs to know; the better you understand their interests and needs, the more effective you'll be at content curation.

#3 Find your niche. Don't cover everything. Decide on your core niche and stick to it. Your topic should be of enough interest to a niche audience, but at the same time be in an area where there is plenty of content to pull from. Remember also to choose a topic that excites you as the curator to prevent boredom setting in.

Actionable Marketing Tip: Follow the advice of Joe Pulizzi, founder Content Marketing Institute, "Find your niche, and then go even more niche".

#4 Always attribute your sources. This should hardly need saying, but always cite the original source when curating content. Not only is this a courtesy to the author, but it can result in increased networking opportunities.

Actionable Marketing Tip: Look up the original author, make an effort to reach out to them and notify them when your curated piece has been published. Quite often the original author will share the article across their social networks too, boosting its reach and traffic.

#5 Add your unique perspective. Don't just copy and paste what you've read; the web is full of endlessly regurgitated content. Adding your own unique perspective is at the heart of what separates curation from mere aggregation.

Actionable Marketing Tip: Provide summaries and key takeaways of main points, add your own perspective, context and commentary on why you did (or didn't) like the piece.

#6 Be selective. Curate from reliable, high quality sources only, selecting the most valuable and relevant information. A good curator is one who is discerning, discriminative, and selective in only sharing the best and most relevant content.

Actionable Marketing Tip: Make sure you read (and understand) every piece of content you curate. Never share just for the sake of sharing; ask yourself if this will educate or entertain your target audience and how it fits with your own marketing goals.

#7 Publish to a content hub before sharing it on social media. A content hub is a repository of archived content which can be discovered and reshared many times in the future. According to content curation site, Scoop.it "if you share to social media only, you only get less than half the traffic and you lose a lot of the new visitors who are in your interest graph but not your social graph and that would come from Google Search."



Actionable Marketing Tip: Set up an account on a content hub such as Curata, Rebel Mouse, or [Scoop.it](#). Use it to create and build a community of shared interest and amplify your content.

#8 Strive for accuracy at all times. Spelling and grammar count. Not only can misspellings and bad grammar be perceived as a sign of disrespect and laziness to the original author, it will also damage your credibility as a curator.

Actionable Marketing Tip: Run spell check on each piece of content you share to help you catch any typos or words you may have misspelled.

#9 Create compelling titles. Add your own twist to curated content by creating headlines that will draw more readers in. Great headlines also encourage more social sharing.

Actionable Marketing Tip: Reaching your audience in an emotional way is a key component in successful copywriting. Run your headlines through the Advanced Marketing Institute's [Headline Analyzer Tool](#) to see how it scores for Emotional

Marketing Value (EMV). According to my EMV score for this article's headline I scored highly on both intellectual and empathetic levels.

#10 Share widely and often on your social media network. Use a variety of social media channels to share your curated content. Be mindful of which network matches your content best. Scheduling your social media updates allows you to share your content numerous times and hit multiple time zones. Try a tool like Buffer, which will also provide feedback on which content generated the most engagement, which in turn helps you plan your strategy even better.

Actionable Marketing Tip: Try reframing your original post as a question, or a statement, highlight a key statistic or different elements of the content each time you re-share it.

#11 Create a consistent content schedule. A burst of curated content shared with your audience one week, followed by nothing for a month, is not a strategy I would recommend. Decide on a schedule and stick to it. This can be anything from one curated piece of content a day to sharing three times a week; whatever works for you. The key is consistency.

Actionable Marketing Tip: Consider e-mailing subscribers a weekly round-up of the best content you've discovered during the week. Schedule it for the same day and time each week.

#12 Don't rely on curation alone. Curated content is designed to complement your content creation plan—not replace it.

Actionable Marketing Tip: Create a mixture of original and curated content for your marketing needs.

Conclusion:

Content curation, supplemented by original content, is the key to a successful content marketing strategy. Often, people think of themselves as either creators or curators as if these two things are mutually exclusive. The imperative to create helpful and relevant content is still important, but equally important is the need to curate helpful and relevant content. However success doesn't happen by itself. To excel requires you to continually and consistently stay on top of your niche as a trusted resource for your audience, alongside the ability to synthesize and provide a unique perspective every time.

We're increasingly living in a world of information overload; by providing a clear, contextually relevant voice a good content curator will separate signal from noise. When your audience discovers in you a trustworthy source of curated content, they will be more inclined to stay for related offerings. To quote Dan Blank of We Grow Media: "Content curation is to make the whole stronger than the sum of the parts".

# Please like me on Facebook, Go on, Go On #3

By Ailish Irvine



## Synopsis:

I enjoyed Congregation so much last year that when Eoin said he was running another one, I was already excited. Last year I dived in, wrote a piece and hoped that nobody scoffed openly at it and that it made the cut. Fortunately enough it did and I went to the event. That is when the problems started, I met the most knowledgeable funny people there and now my fear of not being knowledgeable and funny has halted productivity completely. So I thought, why not write about trying to please people through social media?

## 4 Takeaways:

1. Don't forget your manners, they create an impression too.
2. Quantity is not Quality.
3. Having 20,000 followers you never talk to is pointless.
4. People are human and they like praise and thanks and respect.

## About Ailish:

Ailish Irvine is a workshop facilitator based in Mayo. She blogs about technology in Education and developed a new course called Virtually Living, which shows people how to find remote working opportunities. She also develops educational resources for online language learning. She is a mammy of 3, an ever hopeful Mayo GAA fan and she's quite fond of social media.

I was having a chat at the weekend with someone about herself and her partner. She said the difference between us is that "he cares about whether people like him or not and I don't. I'm much happier, he is constantly trying to please people". I then realised that it was quite similar in my own house and that the non people pleaser (who shall remain nameless) is much happier than the pleaser. This got me thinking to how much you can tell by people's behaviour on social media. How things that we do online are completely alien to what we would do in the real world.

We could start by analysing those on Twitter with an egg for a face. They don't mind looking like Humpty Dumpty, they don't care. They haven't felt the need to roll out the picture of the Dalai Lama embracing them as their profile picture. They aren't dressed as a spray tanned, hair coiffed, recently trimmed down bridesmaid or they haven't got their most recent award on show.

So what are the kinds of social media misdemeanours that we do in order to get people to like us?

- (1) The misdemeanours which annoy me the most are when you have followed someone on Twitter and you get a DM telling you to like them on FACEBOOK. That is like meeting someone at a party saying hello, buying them a drink and they say, "Oh will you get me another one while you are at it".
- (2) People who never thank people for ANYTHING.
- (3) People tweeting to celebrities about random nonsense is the same as heckling them in public. It's like going to a party and the VIP is in a corner and you roar over at them about whatever nonsense comes into your head.
- (4) People who only retweet complimentary things about themselves and never retweet anyone else's content.
- (5) People who steal other people's funny lines and try and pass them off as their own.
- (6) People who send a request to someone on LINKEDIN and never ever speak to them or explain to them why you are adding them to your network. That's like inviting someone to your party and ignoring them while you are there. Then saying, "Give me your CV while I have a nosey at it
- (7) People who endorse people on LinkedIn that they don't know. That's like writing a reference for someone you have never worked with, you wouldn't do it in real life.
- (8) People who have tons of followers but won't follow anyone.....Interesting.
- (9) People who take photos of their breakfast and show everyone. (Foodbloggers are forgiven) I mean would you turn up at your neighbour's house with a photo of your delicious scrambled eggs and toast....?
- (10) Saying Happy Work Anniversary to people.... Would you walk up to someone with a happy work anniversary card saying, I hear you are now 3 years at Penneys, I'm delighted for you....

## Contact Ailish:

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You can follow Ailish's updates on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) or via [email](#).

I suppose the moral of the story is, if you are sociable online, be so in reality. Collecting followers to appear popular is pointless if you never engage with them or they are unlikely to offer value to you or your business.

Now having said all that, would you ever follow me on Facebook, I'm the people pleaser of the family, Go on, Go on, Go on.

LiNKIN with me and I'll endorse you.

## Think like a Professional Journalist to create great content. #4

By Oisín Browne



### Synopsis:

The skills and mindset needed to be a great content creator have been with us longer than businesses have seen marketing as an important tool in their success toolbox. Professional journalists have been using these skills since the dawn of day to create engaging and beneficial content. They instinctively go out and look for the story. They research their story. They know their reader's demographic and narrate the communiqué for their audience. A great reporter can distinctively place themselves into the reader's shoes in the same way, as a great marketer needs to learn to walk the potential clients shoes.

### 4 Takeaways:

1. You need to get out from the office and look for the story.
2. Guest blog on blogs that are established and influential.
3. Create a content calendar with the dates of each story idea and stick to it.
4. Build a valuable community to which you can call on to share your content.

### About Oisín Browne:

Oisín is head of Marketing/PR for The City Bin Co., Author of the Amazon best selling business book "The Bin-man's Guide to Selling" and the soon to be released follow up "The Bin-man's Guide to Marketing".

Oisín is also the President and Co-Founder of the Sales Master Minds



Learn from traditional media to advance your digital marketing skills.

One place this is very possible is in the area of content creation. The skills and mindset needed to be a great marketer have been with us longer than businesses have seen marketing as an important tool in their success toolbox. Professional journalists have been using these skills since the dawn of day to create engaging and beneficial content. They instinctively go out and look for the story. They research their story and they write great content. They know their reader's demographic and narrate the communiqué for their audience. A great reporter can distinctively place themselves into the reader's shoes in the same way, as a great marketer needs to learn to walk the potential clients shoes. Whether you're part of a multinational company or you're a sole trader, content marketing requires a creative person that knows how to collect information, how to do product history analysis, how to build relationships with customers, and carry out fact finding missions. You must learn where to get first, second and third hand consumer feedback. Once all this information is collected the magic is in putting it all together that creates something special. You are aiming to create amazing content that will hook the audience in a way that brings them back for more.

You need to get out from the office and look for the story. You are not just looking for a story that will be pleasing to your social media platforms, local media or your logo-loving ego. You need to provide valued material that will be seen as a benefit to your industry, other industries, online sites, and even your competitors! Start by going to your local newspaper and offer to write a topic focus column, which will be of value to you, the newspaper and the reader. Also, start a blog, separate to your business blog on a topic that allows you to be or become an expert in that field. For example: If you sell baby products, write a mother and baby advice column.

If you are an accountant you could write tips for good home bookkeeping and money management or if you sell farming equipment write for a farming supplements about best farming practices. Offer to contribute to newspapers, blogs, local newsletters or

networking group. Entrepreneurs Ireland alumni network and when not acting as taxi driver to three kids, she loves to learn new skills.

### Contacting Oisin:

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You can follow Oisin's [Twitter feed](#), catch his thoughts on his [blog](#) or [email](#) him.

whitepapers. Contact businesses with existing blogs and strong social media platforms and invite them to interview you about your story. Guest blog on blogs that are established and influential.

Decide how often you wish to create content. Create a content calendar with the dates of each story idea and stick to it. Writing is a skill that takes time, from idea generation, looking for the story, to writing, drafting, editing, publishing and sharing the story. The more you do it the better you will become at it, so use and build that content creation muscle!

The key objective is that you are speaking to your target market about subjects that interest and help them, which may not be your product however maybe indirectly linked to what you sell. In doing so a few basics will start to happen. You are establishing a network. You are writing regularly. When you are writing you need to research. If you are researching you are learning. You are networking a particular cliental through your online presence and when they have a need for your services you will be on their radar. The door will be opened. The familiarity of your name will be warm and the sale will come naturally.

Place all that is appealing to your customers, past present and future at the centre of your marketing efforts when writing content. The best way to do this is with the mindset of a great Journalist. Make your content as valuable as possible and you will instantaneously show that you value the person reading it: your present consumer and potential customers.

Content marketing is more than just keywords and links. It's about Increasing awareness of your business and brand. If you focus on that quality and relevant content, you'll ultimately draw the interest of a loyal audiences. Build a valuable community to which you can call on to share your content.

# What's in my handbag: My Favourite WordPress Plugins. #5

By Roseanne Smith



## Synopsis:

A roundup of my current favourite WordPress plugins including tips on how I choose from the multitude of plugins available in the WordPress Directory..

## 4 Takeaways:

1. WordPress Plugins will greatly increase the functionality of your WordPress site.
2. Use my tips on choosing plugins to help you decide which plugin is best for your purposes.
3. You don't need to be a web developer to use WordPress but do make an effort to learn HTML and CSS to increase your confidence when using it if nothing else.
4. Allows keep an eye on your handbag in my company. I can sniff out chewing gum at ten paces.

## About Roseanne Smith:

I'm an online marketing consultant assisting clients in maximising their online presence realistically. I also develop content about online marketing trends, best practice and practicalities as reference, guidance and (hopefully) inspiration for my clients. Glacaim páirt mhíosúil i Splanc, irisclár Gaeilge Newstalk. I contribute once a month to Splanc, Newstalk's weekly Irish language magazine show. I am on the board of Dublin Youth Theatre. I have a personal blog at [www.roseannesmith.com](http://www.roseannesmith.com)

I've been blogging since 2003 and using WordPress since 2008. Previously I had self hosted a Blogger-powered site but felt that it was moving away from an open platform that I could tweak to my liking. I'm not a programmer by any stretch of the imagination but I do like to be able to tinker if the need arises. My interest in WordPress has inspired me to get up close and personal with PHP and MySQL. However, beyond a weekend workshop I have not taken this any further. This introduction is by way of sharing what level this article is pitched at: it is for the curious WordPress blogger who is not afraid of HTML and CSS.



When I was growing up I always loved having a good old root around my Granny and my Mum's handbags. Granny's sometimes revealed a few treats but it was mostly tissues, notebooks, cigarettes and portable ashtrays. I sometimes struck gold in Mum's: a longtime ex-smoker she always had those tiny packs of PK Gum in her bag.

Credit: <http://shannangia.blogspot.ie/2012/01/pk-chewing-gum-commercial-stills.html>

I obviously wasn't the only one with this fascination: a quick Google search reveals a whole Flickr Pool entitled "[What's in your bag?](#)". Ten minutes of fascinated scrolling later, I have reconnected with my inner child. Not as much twing gum (as it was called in my family) as I would like.

Similarly I remain fascinated by other "reveals". I work with a number of clients who are involved in creative industries and when working on potential topics for blogs I constantly reiterate that readers are fascinated by process. As a creative individual you are not alone in the wide world in your excitement about the possibilities brought by a new discovery, product or method. And if you are, isn't it fabulous to be unique?

Without further ado welcome to my reveal. Please feel free to root through my blogging handbag: these are my current favourite WordPress plugins that I install on the majority of blogs that I manage. These are the ones that I chose after reviewing the plugins on offer for particular functionalities. When choosing plugins for a particular functionality I generally check

- Compatibility with current version of WP: A reliable plugin will update soon after a major release of WP so if it's currently not compatible check back in a couple of days or a week. Another new-ish, useful indicator is the "X people say it works." which appears at the bottom right of a plugin page on WordPress.Org.
- Support: Are the plugin authors responding to users' queries on WordPress.org? Bear in mind if there is a premium offering of the plugin, support may be part of this and so may not be handled on WordPress.org.
- Have a quick skim through reviews: if a particular problem keeps raising its head recently, steer clear. Personally I rarely use anything with less than 4 stars: if nothing else it reveals that it didn't inspire enough love to merit a click in a star. \*Goes off to rate favourite plugins.\*
- Downloads are not necessarily a great indicator as I've no doubt many WordPressers are magpies like I. However, all other things being equal, go with the

## About Roseanne:

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Find Roseanne everywhere by starting at her [website](#).

plugin with the larger download footprint.

- If you have the time, there is no harm in doing a Google about the plugin you are veering towards. You may find a blog post that compares it to other similar plugins which will support your decision or point out some issues.

Let me know in the comments below if you have any other way of choosing plugins - I'd love your input!

And now - drumroll please - shared in no particular order, much like the contents of a handbag, my current favourite plugins:

1. **Akismet** - Akismet will manage comment spam on your WordPress blog. No matter how small your blog is you will soon discover that it is a target for spammers. This is usually the very first plugin that I install. This plugin is part of the Automattic suite of plugins. Automattic is the company responsible for WordPress. What I take from this is that they reckon this plugin is so good and so essential that they just bought it. \$5 per month for one site or "name your price" for non-commercial use.
2. **Backup Buddy** - This plugin, which requires an annual subscription, automates backup of your database and content. I originally came across as a way to migrate a WP site from a test environment to a live environment. It works perfectly for this and continues to back up my suite of WP sites. Probably the second plugin I install. \$100 per year for 10 sites.
3. **Google Analytics DB for WP** - This analytics package works seamlessly with Google Analytics. It displays key analytics right in the dashboard so lets your clients see how they are doing on a regular basis. The site administrators can choose whether Editors, Authors and Contributors can also see the analytics. This plugin might not seem essential but if you are developing a site for a client it allows them a snapshot of how they are doing without getting lost in Google Analytics proper.
4. **WP Updates Notifier** - One of the accusations I have heard levelled at WordPress is the constant need to update. True there are updates required regularly on Wordpress itself, on themes and on plugins. I think it's a small price to pay for bug fixes and security on products and services that are either cheap or free. This plugin notifies you (or your developer) when updates are required and I find it indispensable to help me keep on top of the sites I manage.
5. **Wordpress SEO by Yoast** - This is a brilliant plugin that checks your post for search optimisation based on the keywords you are focussing on. This robust addition to my collection has quickly become indispensable for my own personal blogging but it's a great way for me to help clients optimise their content for search, get them thinking about writing online and improving how their content appears in search and social. It's easy to use for clients working on posts but also offers more advanced options to help optimise the whole WordPress driven site for search and social. A nifty little feature is the ability to write unique headlines for content to be shared on Google+ and Facebook.
6. **Twitter Cards Meta** - If you like your custom and unique headlines for social media I would highly recommend this plugin. It ensures that your content, when shared on Twitter, is displayed using Twitter Cards. This means featured images, videos, galleries and 4 other types of specialised media will be shown in a more visual manner on the Twitter web and mobile applications. This should give your content a lovely shove. You

will need to validate your site at <https://cards-dev.twitter.com/validator> and the good news is you can validate cards for your clients' sites too. Phew. (If you would like to know more about Twitter Cards try and catch fellow WordPressophile James Whatley speaking about them or check out his slide deck)

7. **AddThis** or **ShareThis** - If you want to use social to build traffic then you should make it easy for your site visitors to share by installing one of these plugins. Both of these popular social sharing tools offer a collection of plugins that will allow you to add sharing buttons to your site. These plugins variously allow you to

- Make it easy for visitors to share your content on their own social profiles, allowing you to highlight your preferred networks. You can also choose various styles and sizes of buttons, or reveal the number of existing shares or not.
- Offer follow buttons to enable your readers to follow you on popular social networks, again focusing on your preferred networks.

These plugins are easy to install, generally requiring an account with the service you choose in order to obtain an API key. You can use one account to manage multiple domains and AddThis offers a PRO version for €99.00 per annum.

8. **Contact Form 7** - This is a fairly simple WordPress plugin that allows you to create different forms for your site. It uses shortcodes and HTML so you'll just have to gird your loins, roll up your sleeves and get stuck in. It generates bespoke forms which you can place anywhere on your site. I like it even more because of its sister plugin, Flamingo.

9. **Flamingo** - A customer relationship management package that works beautifully with Contact Form 7. It creates an exportable address book of all those who filled in your Contact Form above and also all commenters. So even if you don't plan to use any contact forms on your site this is a great plugin for harvesting your commenters' email addresses.

10. **PageBuilder by Site Origin** - I came across this handy little plugin when I bought a theme from Site Origin. It works with other themes as well and allows you (or your developer) to create layouts for pages. It allows you to add columns to a page or to add widgets normally used in sidebars in the centre of the page. I've used it to create better looking contact pages but the possibilities are manifold.

11. **Events Manager** - A couple of my clients work in the creative and wellbeing industries. They need to be able to display scheduled classes, workshops and events. They need to take bookings and payments for bookings. Events Manager does all that and MUCH more besides. It includes mapping and the creation of unique landing pages for event types and venues. Certain features are of course only available with the Pro version which costs \$150 per annum for five sites, \$75 for one.

12. **EWWW Image Optimiser** - Now this is probably the most technical of all the plugins I've written about so far. If you know anything about sharing images online it should be a doddle for you but it was a bit of a learning curve for me! However it is well documented and if in doubt, Google is your friend. Basically it optimises images as you upload them to your site, maintaining quality while lowering file size. This will mean your content will load faster, use less bandwidth, and your backups will speed up. Full of win!

13. **Require Featured Image** - Many themes nowadays are visually rich. Or they would

be if the writers didn't keep forgetting to include an image. This plugin will not allow a post to be published without a featured image being added. Simple.

14. **Edit Flow** - I originally tripped across this plugin when I wished to archive a whole collection of blog posts for a client who wanted a fresh start. The content of the site had been in the wild too long and was busily pulling traffic along its inbound links. We wanted the content to remain live but not front and centre on the site. Edit Flow allows the site admin to create custom statuses. This allowed us to create an archive status and we were off. However there is much more to this plugin that is especially beneficial to a team blog. It includes an editorial calendar, comments and discussion. Editorial Metadata, notifications, story budget and user groups allows editors and teams to remain efficient and effective. So if you're thinking about creating a group blog this plugin would be indispensable.

15. Coming Soon Page & Maintenance Mode by SeedProd - If you have a big redesign on the cards, install this plugin. It allows a little more flexibility and styling than others I have tried in the past. I have used it for clients with media embedded in the holding page so that visitors don't go away completely unloved.

And that should do it! 15 plugins for you to consider. Some I consider essential, some nice to have and some specialised. Apparently the founder of WordPress, Matt Mullenweg, once met a man with 500 plugins on his site. Agus má tá bréag ansin, ní mise a chum é!

## Is there a human in there? #6

By Aisling Nelson



### Synopsis:

It's really noisy on the web and consumers are rightfully distrustful. They expect to be involved in their purchasing decisions. And they want to know who they're buying from. As business owners, we need to find ways to reassure, answer queries and solve problems. The best way we can do this is to stop thinking about selling and start building relationships instead. Social media is all about being human!

### 4 Takeaways:

1. Marketing is not about selling - it's about building trust.
2. Customers want a 'sneak peak' into your business.
3. The connections you build with competitors and peers are as important as those with customers.
4. Communicating online forces you to have a clear business strategy and message.

### About Aisling Nelson:

Aisling Nelson owns Three Thought Bubbles and is a social media trainer and mentor. She helps businesses to be more human on the web, through authentic and clear communication. Using storytelling techniques, she trains businesses how to connect emotionally with their customers. Most importantly, she gives people the confidence to tell these stories. Each story begins by creating a clear business vision and strategy.



How can we be more human on the web? This is something that has fascinated me since I set up my first business in 1998. I began blogging in 2008 because I knew that my static website didn't show my personality. And if I'm totally honest, I wanted to avoid having to attend any sort of networking event (That's all radically changed, I promise!)

So, how can we reach through those grey screens and make human connections with people? I've learned that it's like all social interactions. We have to be good at listening, being open and being patient. I learned something unexpected too - the relationships you build with competitors and peers are as valuable as the ones you have with customers.

I train businesses how to write a blog but what I really do is show people how to be human online. I don't claim to get it right all the time but here are some of the things I've learned along the way.

What do you do and why should I care?

Get really clear on exactly what you do and who you help. Make it equally clear what you don't do and who you don't help. If you try to appeal to everyone, you'll appeal to no-one. Respect your customers' time and make it easy for them to know if you're a good fit.

Can I trust you?

Write a good 'About' page with a professional and friendly photo of yourself or your team. This is the hardest thing for most people to do.

It's a living work in progress - don't take yourself too seriously!

Write it in the first person and remember that your business is about you but only in the context of how you can help your customer. Include your business address and the

## Contacting Aisling:

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Aisling blogs at [Three Thought Bubbles](#) [Tweets](#) or you can [email](#) her.

name or names of your team - it's amazing how many businesses say 'We do x,y,z ... email us at

[sales@genericbusiness.com](mailto:sales@genericbusiness.com)'

Can I relate to you?

Use conversational language and drop the corporate lingo. Read the content out loud and see how it sounds. Would you use these words if you were talking to someone in person? If it bores you, it will bore the person who is reading it! It's possible to be professional and personable.

How does your brand make me feel?

Make your website or blog a place that's pleasant for customers to hang out. That means no flashing animations, lots of space (preferably white) and clear navigation. Remember, your brand exists in the mind of your customer and is much more than your logo design.

How do you do business?

Quality product images and detailed descriptions of services are essential.

But your customer is also interested in 'behind the scenes' peeks into your business. Find ways to share your beliefs, processes and day to day insights.

Check out the patagonia blog 'The Cleanest line' - <http://www.thecleanestline.com/>

Entertain me

We go online to learn something, be inspired or entertained. Most businesses find it easy to share knowledge or inspiration. We also need to find ways to entertain our customers by varying the content we share. Audio, video and visuals are powerful ways to make emotional connections. Become a curator of interesting content; it doesn't have to all be yours! Just make sure you credit and seek permission first.

Watch Heston Blumenthal's video about The fat Duck - Like a kid in a sweetshop

What do I do next?

If we are in business, we are selling products or services. Hold your customer by the hand and guide them through the process. Make it obvious what the next step in the process is.

Suggested reading: Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability by Steve Krug

And here is one final thought to get you thinking...

There will always be people with similar skills to you - what sets you apart is your story and how you tell it.

# If Content is King then Research is Emperor #7

By Joy Redmond



## Synopsis:

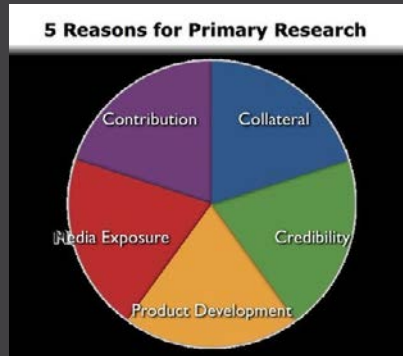
I've been loitering with intent around the web industry in this country like a dirty penny since the mid 90s. I've seen every fad, gimmick and craze come and go but I can tell you that quality research will always have a seat at the table. Here are 5 good reasons to put primary research on your agenda: 1) Developing relevant, accurate marketing 2) Establishing credibility 3) Feeding product development 4) Gaining Media Exposure 5) Making a contribution.

## 4 Takeaways:

1. Fads come and go but quality content supplied by quality research will always have a seat at the table.
2. Quality research will not only inform your marketing and positioning but have a profound impact on product development and your product roadmap.
3. Primary research establishes credibility. White papers, research reports and case studies will clearly position you as a leader, not a follower, in your sector. Credibility and credible content leads to column inches and airtime.
4. Curation is all very well but sometimes it's just nice to give something back.

## About Joy Redmond:

Joy Redmond has been working in the web industry (both agency and client side) since 1996. Joy hid out briefly in academia, dabbled in entrepre-



5 reasons to put primary research on your agenda:

I've been loitering with intent around the web industry in this country like a dirty penny since the mid 90s. I've seen every fad, gimmick and craze come and go but I can tell you that quality research will always have a seat at the table.

### 1) Marketing Collateral.

Often when asking people to provide endorsements for a particular brand I'm representing, a good proportion suggest I write it myself for them to sign off and I politely refuse. It would be easy to write a glowing 'efficient and effective, cheap and excellent ...' but not only does it come across as grossly insincere but I'm missing that golden opportunity of real valuable customer feedback.

Asking your customers a few informal questions about how they found your product or service and how and why they continue to use it will inform you how to position and promote your offering. You'll be forced to rewrite your elevator pitch, features and benefits and the most gorgeous little quotes and testimonials will just fall from the page. You can polish the packaging but the best messages always come from the horse's mouth.

### 2) Credibility

You can establish credibility by demonstrating you have knowledge others do not. The only real way of knowing more than someone else is by going out and gathering the data. Go forth and research and publish white papers, case studies, catchy info graphics, interviews with industry leaders, product reviews and anything else that clearly positions you as a leader, not a follower, in your sector.

### 3) Product Development

Detailed analysis of user behaviour and primary research techniques such as focus groups, usability tests, lengthy surveys and personal interviews can all feed into product development. We have to make a distinction between the softly softly pop-up questions which help us in marketing towards getting the nitty-gritty that will feed product design and service delivery. A water cooler chat won't illicit that your user interface is not intuitive or that users have no idea what specific functionality offers. Be prepared to find out what customers don't like too. That's ok, the product or service is there to meet their needs so you can incorporate their feedback into the next iteration. Be prepared to deep dive into your data and consider interviewing people who refuse to use your product. The findings might not be very flattering but they will be insightful and hugely useful and will inform and impact your product roadmap. You probably won't publish the research paper but it'll probably be one of the most important pieces of research you've ever collected.

### 4) Media Exposure.

neurship but has always worked in marketing communications roles involving some form of research / content development. Her specialty is helping clients pinpoint what benefits they offer to clients (research), communicating those benefits through effective messaging, copywriting and branding (marketing), developing quality collateral, case studies, white papers (content) and spinning all of the above into an attractive media pitch (PR).

### Contacting Joy:

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You can follow Joy on [Twitter](#), catch her insights on her [blog](#) or [email](#) her.

I've written before about the 3 little words every spin doctor should know - [Man Bites Dog](#) - in that a good story has to be a little different or unusual to catch our attention; dogs biting humans is an everyday occurrence, a story is when the man bites the dog back.

There comes a time in every spin doctor's calendar when there is simply nothing happening - no product launch, no event, no strategic alliance, no big client win and so on. Rather than burn your bridges harassing for media coverage without substance, just conduct some research and create some relevant and attractive media hooks. Those folk just love metrics: "50% of women say... , water charges will cost you a college education..." Also a quick stat or snappy infographic will more likely go viral rather than a tedious press release that has nothing new to say. So when in doubt, research. When idle, definitely research.

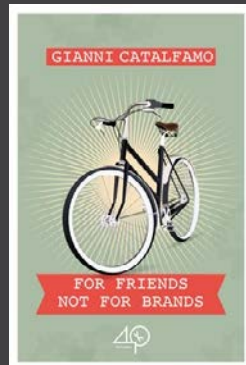
### 5) Make a contribution.

I love the phrase content curation. It airbrushes and lets you away with plagiarism. It gives you carte blanche to repurpose other peoples' graft and brand it as your own. I know we can credit the original source or directly share or RT but sure while you're at it, why don't you get up and out and conduct some fresh research yourself.

Curation is all very well but sometimes it's just nice to give something back.

# Why is Digital Marketing like a bicycle? #8

By Gianni Catalfamo



Why is Digital Marketing like a bicycle?

for Friends, not for Brands

Essentially because, like in a bicycle, you have two wheels who serve two very different purposes, but are both equally important.

The REAR wheel provides impulse, energy, velocity; the rear wheel is all about knowing how to manage a Digital project, be it large or small, where you break it down in phases whose progress you can easily measure, to avoid being swamped

by the uncountable multitude of what you can measure (because in digital, you can measure everything).

## Synopsis:

Digital Marketing is "like a bicycle" because, like in a bicycle, you have two wheels which serve two very different purposes, but are equally important.

The Rear Wheel deals with how to engineer a system to sustainably produce content that Google will deem as "good" while at the same time retaining a strong connection with the Brand messages.

The Front Wheel deals with the softer issues that often sink even the most successful Digital Marketing program: a successful project may grind to a halt because we failed to involve the right company function at the right moment, asking the right questions in a language they can understand.

## 4 Takeaways:

1. You don't control the media. Get over it. (aka "For friends, not for Brands!")
2. People are the Killer app of the Internet.
3. How can listening to your customers ever be wrong?
4. Measure only what you can act upon

## About Gianni Catalfamo:

- LIFE 1 -

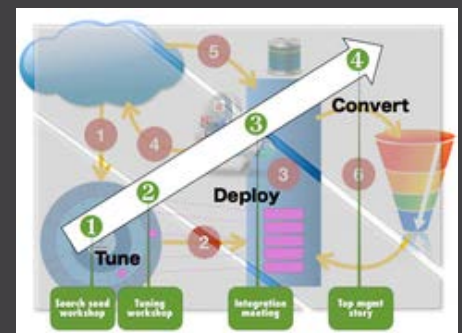
After completing his Nuclear Engineering degree at the Milan Polytechnic in 1982, Gianni worked for 2 years

Understanding how you break down a complex projects into its components is important, especially if you accept the fundamental law of Digital Communications which is that Brands do not control the medium (anymore), simply because the new crop of media is frictionless and only thrives on content or, to be more precise, on what Google perceives to be "good" (= worthy of Googlejuice). The new media needs advertising support, but instead of being directly paid as in the old times, such support is mediated by Google and therefore access to this financial support drastically depends on quality of content.

The Rear Wheel deals therefore essentially on how to engineer a sustainable system to sustainably produce content that Google will deem as "good" while at the same time retaining a strong connection with the Brand messages.

However, the Rear Wheel does not stop there, as Awareness must turn to Engagement and Engagement to Prospecting and - ultimately - to Sales.

People can and should be followed as they walk the so-called Customer Journey (which, by the way, does not stop at the sale, as we want to make sure every happy customer becomes an Advocate for our Brand); while the process can and should be measured in its overall yield, much more interesting is breaking this total yield in phase-related yield, setting target and success criteria, but also providing a sure-fire way to look at where the cogs are not working to perfection, what to improve and how.



This sort of Governance helps large Corporations to deal with the sense of uneasiness coming from the acceptance of the loss of control embedded in the basic principle, replacing it with a steering mechanism that may be perceived as more complex, but once it is understood, it's really not complex at all.

And the Front Wheel?

at IBM as a Systems Engineer, prior to switching to sales and marketing with Olivetti; in 1986 he founded the Italian operation of Lotus Development Corp., initially working out of its European HQ based in Windsor, UK, and then setting up the first Lotus office in Milan. His responsibilities at Lotus grew along with the success of the company in Italy which in the 7 year of tenure as Country General Manager moved from 2 employees and USD 700,000 in sales to 35 employees and over USD 10 million in sales.

- LIFE 2 -

In 1993 he joined Image Time as partner of the agency which In 1999 was acquired by Omnicom and became part of Pleon which in 2010 merged with Ketchum to form Ketchum Pleon, one of the world's largest communications consultancies. For many years Country CEO for Italy, he was European Director for the Technology Practice and later European Director, Digital & Social Media.

Gianni coordinated the development of the Digital & SoMe offering across Europe, defining and articulating the agency's methodology, and creating the education program to support it; he was routinely involved in new business pitching in this area as well as in getting new accounts off to a good start to then hand it over to country teams.

- LIFE 3 -

In 2012 Gianni left Ketchum to set up his consultancy boutique called [cc:catalfamo](#) focusing on the transformation process associated with the transition to Digital in very large, international contexts.

Contacting Gianni Catalfamo:

You can follow Gianni on [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#) or connect with him on [LinkedIn](#). You can also follow his thoughts on his [blog](#), [ello](#) or [email](#) him.

The front wheel of a bicycle provides direction: it does not matter how strong we push on the pedals, without a sense of direction we'll never get to our desired destination.

The Front Wheel deals therefore with the softer issues that often sink even the most successful Digital Marketing program.



Once you master the mechanical nature of the Rear Wheel, you may be tempted to reduce everything to spreadsheets and dashboards, forgetting that large Corporations are complex entities: a successful project may grind to a halt because we failed to involve the right company function at the right moment, asking them the right questions in a language they can understand and respond to. Communications, Marketing, Sales, Top Management and Customer Support need all to be involved so that the successful pilot becomes a team

success that everybody can regard as their own and they can build upon.

Finally the Front Wheel is about the Team; who do you bring on board, who does what when, how do you rotate people and professionals in and out of the team, how do you lead it.

Hopefully the speech will make attendees curious enough so that they will want to buy the book, which premieres in Cong for its launch.

## Embodied Creativity. #9

By Tom Murphy



### Synopsis:

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How we can bring more creativity back to our daily lives.

### 4 Takeaways:

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1. Creativity is hard
2. Our minds are a cacophony or logical this and rational that to the point of painful counter productivity.
3. The embodied self where the real world and our minds meet is where creativity emerges from.
4. Let's listen to our bodies more, play more and have some idol, pointless fun.

### About Tom Murphy:

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Ex-Journalist and occasional writer.

### Contacting Tom Murphy:

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You can contact Tom by [email](#).

Being creative is hard. It is so hard that there is a professional class being paid quite well, (very well sometimes) to be 'creative'. And while there is some validity to the idea that they get to be creative so we don't have to do the hard work of coming with original, interesting and useful ideas all day long it doesn't follow that we cannot do the same if we wanted to.

But why is creativity so hard? Actually, the question should be, "Why is creativity so hard for adults?" Children have no problem at all with the world of imagination. In fact, it would be impossible for a child to grow into a reasonable sort of adult unless their constant disposition was one of curiosity, experimentation and outright imaginal creation.

It has been said that childhood play is essential for us to develop a moral being. It can't be inculcated as an abstraction but that's for another blog.

What happened to the creative geniuses that we once were? The short answer is abstraction. A child lives in a world where everything is useful or of potential use. They are interested in what things do. The abstract category or designation that an object has is secondary. However, in just a few short years of schooling abstraction supersedes direct experience as our primary way of engaging with the world. Dreaming and idle experimentation are increasingly frowned upon. First by the authorities and then, sadly, by ourselves.

Don't get me wrong, the ability to think in a linear and logical manner is absolutely essential for us to survive and thrive. But it is the abstract mind, in its default logical mode, that says there has to be either 'real' thinking or creative dreaming - not both. I think that rationality and creativity can live happily happily entwined. The creative mind has no problem with that idea at all while our reductive mindsets recoil in horror at the thought.

Maybe that is why we feel creativity is so hard. We are constantly assaulted by critical inner voices, constantly fighting off distractions presented to us as something better to with our time and dealing with the general inertia caused by a rational mind unwilling to commit to a future it can't predict.

We will never be able to separate out the creative from the operational and it really is hard work fighting for creative space in a rational brain that regards itself as being helpful in providing order to what it sees as randomness. Maybe the creatives deserve the money for fighting that war day and day out.



However, if we look at children carefully it is easy to observe that they learn with their bodies. Their intelligence is embodied. In the absence of relentless abstraction children's minds use their bodies in a continuous interplay of experimentation with the world around them to learn and grow.

What if we were to listen to our intuitions and allow our feelings about our immediate environment to influence our behaviour? Instead of making immediate mental calculations we take a breath or two to feel how our body regards a given situation.

We can play a game of hotter and colder with ourselves. Use our bodies instead of our minds to derive information from the environment and instead of formulating mental considerations we immediately respond by acting with our bodies. If we get a cool response then move to a warmer response. And just keep doing it and see where we end up.

But it is a silly idea and who has time for that sort of nonsense?

# There's no Such Thing As an SME. #10

By Niall Devitt



## Synopsis:

Social media and the internet have changed the competitive landscape for good for Irish businesses. Even those who sell locally are competing with international players as customers are constantly compared with them. It can be a painful transition but unavoidable.

## 4 Takeaways:

1. Social media has changed the dynamic.
2. Mindset shift can be painful.
3. Like or not you are competing with international players.
4. Digest and accept the challenge.

## About Niall Devitt:

Niall Devitt is a doer, not a talker when it comes to social media. Niall advises organisations how to plan, design and implement social media strategies that generate real business returns. Niall is Chief Digital Strategist & Founder at the Ahain Group, an independent, ideas-led social business consultancy with experience of working with all types of clients and sectors– from large blue-chip multinationals to the 1 SMEs. In 2009, Niall co-founded TweakYourBiz.com (formally Bloggertone.com) an international, business community and online publication.

By Niall Devitt.

Niall Devitt #10 No such thing as an SME

Once upon a time, you could open a business, market and sell locally and do pretty well as a result. Those days are gone. Globalisation, the internet and social media have radically changed how we do business.

- Nowadays to survive, you need to think nationally.
- To succeed, you are already thinking internationally. And everyone needs to think technology.
- While business values can largely remain intact, this realisation requires a shifting of your mind-set and this shifting can be painful:
- Acute pain is good – It's short-lasting. The business owner accepts their reality and quickly starts to re-focus on what needs to get done to move forward.



- Chronic pain is bad – It's ongoing. The business owner cannot or refuses to accept their reality. They don't like these "new ways" and insist on sticking to the tried and trusted.
- Eventually, the business dies.

Back to thinking internationally vs. nationally:

Why does your business need to think internationally when all your customers are Irish?

The reasoning is pretty simple and it's because your customers buy internationally.

"Hold on a minute", I hear you say, "not my product, they don't, I only compete locally or nationally".

Yes, but what about their expectations?

It doesn't really matter whether or not they buy your product internationally. The bar has been set. This is the new customer mind-set.

You're being compared against the Amazons or Apples of this world whether you realise it or not.

"That's not fair!" I hear you say, "Amazon or Apple have huge budgets and teams, I can't be expected to compete with them".

## Contacting Niall:

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You can follow Niall thoughts on [Twitter](#), connect with him on [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#) or check out the [Ahain Group](#).

It's a tough ask, I'll give you that but take a moment to digest it - that's the first step.

*Niall will also be speaking at the Munster SME Business Summit on the 13th of November and with an Irish SME (with very local values) on the way to becoming a global business.*

# Your 3 Step Guide to Kick Ass at Digital Marketing. #11

By Declan Clancy



## Synopsis:

The cost barriers in marketing have been broken down like never before. The big issue now is all marketers are competing for peoples attention in a time people are getting bombarded with ad's 24/7. Stand out from the crowd using my 3 Step Guide to Kick Ass at Digital Marketing and you will never have to worry about getting peoples attention again!

## 4 Takeaways:

1. Why Digital Marketing is a lot like Air Travel.
2. Why you should use Buyer Personas.
3. What is the Buyers Journey and how to create content for each stage of the journey.
4. What is the 80/20 rule and why you should take note of it.

## About Declan Clancy:

Declan is Online Community Manager at the European SharePoint

Conference. Declan joined this start up just over 3 years ago and has helped build the conference and on-line community from humble beginnings to the biggest SharePoint event in Europe boasting 1,400+ attendees. Prior to this

Declan studied Commerce in UCC receiving a First Class Honours Degree despite getting sidetracked for a year studying marketing in Ohio!



Digital Marketing is a lot like air travel. Now before you put me in a straightjacket and lock me in a padded room let me explain why!

Before commuter planes it was still possible to travel the world and reach people in faraway lands however there were significant time and financial costs associated with travelling by sea. Air travel quickly became a more popular option than travelling by sea thus leading to more airlines being established and driving flight prices down for passengers to the point where its never been cheaper for the public.

The internet has transformed the way we do marketing much like the plane revolutionised travel. The traditional methods of catching people's attention were too financially prohibitive. Email, social media and inbound marketing are far more cost effective methods of marketing meaning anyone can set up their own online business reaching potential customers around the world without having to leave your living room!

The big issue now of course is we are all vying for people's attention and having a good product or service simply isn't good enough anymore. To paraphrase Seth Godin to get noticed you need to be "remarkable" which is why I have created this 3 step plan so you can be exactly that.

### Kick Ass Rule #1 – Use Buyer Personas

In order to properly engage with your audience you need to truly understand them. To do this you need to ask questions. Simply having an idea in your head of what they want with nothing to back it up is naïve.

The best way to get a clear picture of your customers and potential customers is to develop buyer personas.

"So, what is a buyer persona?"

## Contacting Declan Clancy:

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You can connect with Declan on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) or by [email](#). I also have my own [Digital Marketing blog](#).

A buyer persona as defined by HubSpot is “A semi-fictional representation of your ideal customer based on market research and real data about your existing customers.”

You need to build up a comprehensive picture of your customers and find out their demographic information, their behaviour patterns, motivations, goals and pain points.

“So how do I build a buyer persona?”

You can use industry reports, do surveys with your own customers, use Google

Analytics and most importantly just talking with your customers and asking them questions until you begin to see patterns emerging in the data.

Group these similarities into buckets (not literally of course) and then start making your personas for your different audiences.

Remember this doesn't have to be the finished article you can update these all the time as you learn more about your consumers or as the industry or their interests change.

Now that you know more about your target audience you can create content specifically for them.

Kick Ass Rule #2 – Use the Buyers Journey

Content is only valuable if it reaches the right person at the right time.

If a stranger came up to you on the street and tried selling you a watch but you already have one then you probably won't be too receptive to what they have to say. However if you were actively looking for a watch because you just broke your last one and were then approached you may pay more attention to the offer.

Before making a purchase decision the buyer will do some research; for this reason it is important to create content to hit your prospect depending on where they are in the Buyer's Journey.

There are 3 stages to the Buyer's Journey: Awareness, Consideration and Decision.

Awareness – The person has a problem or opportunity but doing research to better understand what the problem or opportunity is. Eg The team aren't all on the same page about the projects they are working on.

At this stage the prospect may be interested in an introductory blog, eBook or webinar about how to effectively manage team projects. They don't want to be sold to at this stage.

Consideration – The person has clearly defined their problem and is looking into various options to fix it. Eg The team has a project management issue and is considering purchasing software for Project Management.

Now that the prospect knows more about the area they probably want some meatier content like an ebook on “The Definitive Guide to Managing Team Projects”

Decision – Decided on the approach to take to fix the problem and doing last minute

research before making purchase decision. Eg Getting a demo from a PM software company.

The prospect is seriously considering purchasing your product now. Content showing past successes like Case Studies are effective at this stage.

Content showing how easy and effective your product is such as webinars on how to use your product or live demos would also help the prospect make their decision.

Kick Ass Rule #3 Use the 80-20 rule

Think of someone you know in your own life who only talks about themselves the whole time.

Now think: "Are they fun to be around?"

I'm guessing for most of you the answer is a resounding no!

The same is true of your company. Nobody wants to hear you talk about how great your product is the whole time. Fact of the matter is your product or service isn't that interesting which is why it's important to strike the right balance with your content delivery.

80% of your content should be thought leadership content and the other 20% can be more promotional. Creating informative and helpful content will help you gain people's trust and their respect and from that point it is much easier to nurture your relationship with this prospect.

Gary Vaynerchuk describes the nurturing process very well in his latest book with this boxing metaphor. Too many people come in with both arms swinging trying to land that right hook knockout blow and get people to buy right now but what is just as important in boxing as in marketing is the jab. Jabs are the little punches you throw that you know aren't going to knock your opponent out or won't cause them to buy from you right now but if you throw enough effective jabs you make it easier to land that knockout punch.

So now that you know the rules to succeed at Digital Marketing go out there and kick ass!

## Social Media Engagement through QR Codes #12

By Audrey Elliott



### Synopsis:

The 'Quick Response' (QR) Codes were introduced by the Japanese Company Denso-Wave in 1994. Their initial use was that the matrix barcode (or two-dimensional code) could be scanned to quickly locate and track a vehicle part. This technology which requires no license fee is now administered by many companies throughout the world; it has a plethora of uses and has become a new mobile marketing tool.

A QR Code is unique from other black and white matrix codes in that it has three large squares (finder patterns) positioned in three corners easily identifying it as a QR Code. QR Codes can be created in different colours in keeping with your brand. They are called Quick Response codes in that the information can be downloaded at a high speed.

QR Codes are a new way to reach the busy consumer. Offline marketing material such as brochures, flyers, posters, newspapers adverts can now be all measured. This is a crucial factor in any marketing campaign. Promotional campaigns can now get a new lease of life – you can entice the consumer to scan the code to receive a free coffee, a money-off voucher or be entered into a competition.

QR Codes can also be linked to any Social Media accounts such as Facebook and Twitter which may help augment the number of fans or followers. QR Codes can help build relationships by providing insight into the users of QR codes (analytics) but more importantly by giving easy access of information to your consumer or potential con-

Before we can engage we must first be introduced to the social site.

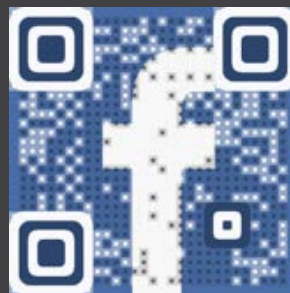
Seeing social media logos such as Facebook or Twitter on a businesses offline physical marketing material lets us know that this business has a social presence. To become a fan (facebook example) we must first log into our facebook account and find what the business is listed as (title) and click like to become a fan.

Sometimes it is not that easy to locate the facebook name of a company for a number of reasons:

1. Facebook can make it difficult to locate a page and requires the business to have better engagement or a larger fan base.
2. The page name might not be the exact same name as the businesses name.
3. The product might have multiple divisions e.g. Lucozade have a Lucozade Sports page and a Lucozade Energy page.

Problem solved!

Use a QR Code embedded facebook logo. Here's what one looks like.



Not only is it a logo it is now a direct and immediate feed to your social media page. In addition, it is also a key management tool. Here we can determine:

1. Where the logo was (brochure/flyer/newspaper) when it was scanned.
2. When it was scanned (time/date).
3. Where the user was when it was scanned. Co. Mayo, Co. Sligo etc
4. How many times the code was scanned.

This will tell us how successful or not the QR Code logo is in terms of its visibility on the marketing material, something that could never be measured before.

Furthermore, we want people to check-in to our business where possible. We all know that when someone checks-in to a business that it appears on the timelines of their friends and hence engagement commences (likes/comments).

Having one of these (customised) at a business premises is a reminder for customers to engage. Here is what one can look like:

sumer such as reviews, maps, ratings, contact information or a direct link to your website.

#### 4 Takeaways:

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1. QR Codes – they are not just black and white!
2. Pre-test the QR Code on the material it will be printed on.
3. Manage your QR Codes, don't just create one and not check how it is working.
4. Be innovative. Surprise the user with good engaging content when they scan. Do not use a QR Code to bring the user to a website that is not mobile optimised.

#### About Audrey Elliott:

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Audrey Elliott is a Marketing Graduate from I.T Sligo. An Investigation into the adoption of QR Codes - An Irish Perspective was the thesis completed during her Masters Year soon followed by a blog on Marketing with QR Codes.

Work: from a travel agency, to Sligo Airport and now working in Ireland West Airport Knock as a Marketing Executive.

Other interest include Orienteering with Sligo Orienteering Club.

#### Contacting Audrey Elliott:

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You can connect with Aoife through [LinkedIn](#) or follow Ireland West Airport Knock updates on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).



BBDO, a worldwide advertising agency developed a special QR glass for Guinness that when it was filled with the black stuff would produce a QR Code and hence when scanned give the opportunity for social media engagement.

See below:



Aer Lingus in 2011 used a QR Code in a recruitment campaign for their Cadet Pilot Training Programme. Here they used the code in an advertisement and once scanned brought the user to a YouTube video of a young man and woman talking about their process in the cadetship and made it very inviting for the user to apply for position. This was an effective use of the code which brought the Aer Lingus brand to life, engaged with the reader and delivered value added digital content from traditional print media.

# Social Media Has a Lot to Learn from the Study of Diaspora #13

By Kingsley Aikins



## Synopsis:

Technology has made the world a smaller place but we need to think communities first and technology second. The study of diaspora can greatly enhance fresh thinking about online communities and engagement.

## 4 Takeaways:

1. Diaspora engagement is all about networking but on a global basis. We need to teach people to be good at this. Nobody is taught networking at school or college. To succeed you have to be both hi-tech and hi-touch.
2. The world is not about countries but cities and regions and diaspora engagement is about place.
3. Start by thinking what you can do for your diaspora rather than what they can do for you.
4. Countries have to 'diasporise' ie convince government, media, the private sector, unions and academia of the importance of the sector and scale up to take advantage of the opportunities.

## About Kingsley Aikins:

Kingsley Aikins is the founder of Diaspora Matters and has a lifetime of involvement in the sector. Born in Dublin he is an economics and politics graduate of Trinity College and also has a postgraduate diploma in International Marketing.

For five years he was the Sydney

Social media is still a relatively recent phenomenon and the evolution of online communities continues to mushroom but much can be learned from the study of timeless diasporas or alumnis especially in the age of unprecedented migration. Communities real or virtual should be always be people and not technology centric.



Migration, quite rightly, is a huge topic attracting much attention. Just recently, in Rome, at an event on Integrating Migration into Development hosted by the Italian Government, the UN Special Representative for International Migration Peter Sutherland described it as 'one of the truly great issues of our time

reflecting the political failure and economic collapse of a major part of the world and the crushing inequality between Africa and Europe'. He pointed out the need for a grandiose plan along the lines of the Marshall Aid plan after the Second World War.

In tandem with this focus on migration, we are also seeing a greater interest in diasporas. Just prior to the Rome event, the Euromed Migration and Development project hosted a workshop in Lyon, courtesy of the French Government, entitled 'Champions of Migration – High Profile Migrants and their Potential for Development' which looked at how successful members of diasporas could be engaged with their countries of origin. There is an increasing interest in this aspect of migration as governments realise that those countries that lost the most to emigration may be in a position to benefit the most by engaging their diasporas. Countries are now coming to see them, not as 'lost actors', but as 'national assets'. Four countries have been very active and particularly successful in this field and they are Israel, India, China and Ireland. Each has taken different approaches and much can be learnt from each. Now, over 100 countries are figuring out their diaspora strategies and devising policies, programmes and projects.

There is also a realisation that, in varying degrees, countries possess 'diaspora capital' which can be defined as the 'overseas resources available to a country, region, city, organisation or place and is made up of flows of people, knowledge and finance that people have for their place of origin, ancestry or affinity'.<sup>[1]</sup> There is also a realisation that diasporas can impact on remittances and philanthropy, trade and investment, education and tourism, culture and sport and at least 30 other sectors. Countries need to 'diasporise' and realise the latent potential that exists and how they need to take action.



Australia based representative of the Irish Trade Board and the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) of Ireland. He founded the Lansdowne Club in Sydney which has become one of the largest Irish business networks in the world. He was a founding director of the Australian Ireland Fund and served as Executive Director responsible for the growth of the fund in Australia and New Zealand. In January 1993 he moved to Boston to take over as Executive Director of the American Ireland Fund and in 1995 he was appointed Chief Executive of the Worldwide Ireland Funds active in 39 cities in 13 countries.

He was responsible for the five year Hope and History Campaign to raise \$100 million for projects in Ireland. After 21 years he left the Ireland Funds and now runs Diaspora Matters in Dublin, which is a consultancy company giving advice on Diaspora issues to governments, corporates and individuals. He writes and speaks extensively on Philanthropy, Diaspora and Networking and in 2011 produced a Global Diaspora Strategies Toolkit. In 2012 he was the keynote speaker at the Hillary Clinton Global Diaspora Forum in Washington and in 2013 was the Conference Chairman of the Global Diaspora Forum which was held in Dublin.

In 2008 Kingsley was awarded a CBE for his work on British-Irish relations.

### Contacting Kingsley Aikins:

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You can see Kingsley's work on [Diaspora Matters' website](#), [LinkedIn](#) or follow him on [Twitter](#).

Traditionally we looked at diasporas through the looking glass of remittances and financial flows which, though important, is only part of the story. Diasporas are influential bridges to knowledge, expertise, resources and markets for countries of origin. With over 232 million people living outside their country of origin, up from 150 million in 1990, and migrant remittances having increased fivefold since 2000 to a total of \$560 billion, according to the World Bank, then the power of the sector is obvious. Today, as we all know, the world is more globalised, interconnected and interdependent than ever before and the recent economic crisis rammed home the fact that it is no longer possible for any nation state to be considered an 'island' nor is it possible to be immune to the ebbs and flows of global economics. To be in a position to fully leverage the advantages of interdependence, countries, companies and organisations are now looking at creating, developing and engaging complex networks of people.

Diasporas constitute collectives of people through which networks can be created and individuals mobilised for mutual benefit. Diaspora capital is taking its place alongside human, social and financial capital in the policy and practice dialogues shaping the 21st century. The emergence of the 'networked world' concept plays into the strengths of diaspora-home country engagements with the key to success being the development of global networks of people of 'affluence and influence'. The upcoming massive intergenerational transfer of wealth (estimated by Accenture to be of the order of \$30 trillion in the US alone) will be both an opportunity and a stimulus to connect diasporas with their home countries.[2] However this will require the painstaking building of networks of long term hearts and minds relationships, the identification of key 'tipping agents' and the acceptance that diasporas can be diverse, diffuse, distant and disputatious.

Many diaspora initiatives fail and there is no 'one size fits all' approach. What is important is that governments understand the potential and put the time and resources into scaling up to take advantage. They need to follow the four step process of Research, Cultivation, Solicitation and Stewardship.

Research is about getting to know who the diaspora are, where they are and what they are doing. They need to be mapped, their histories learned, individuals and organisations identified and profiles built.

Cultivation evolves over time. Initially it is often impulsive and emotional but, eventually, becomes habitual, thoughtful, strategic and, ultimately, inspirational. Cultivation is mostly about listening and learning about the diaspora's concerns, interests and hopes for the future of their home country. This will facilitate the identification of what goals and objectives they have and perhaps what legacy they might like to leave. The key is building trust.

Solicitation is all about 'asks and tasks'. Key diaspora members need to be engaged in small groups with specific projects over a limited period of time. General evangelical exhortations to the diaspora, while sounding good, do not lead to action. Diaspora initiatives have a habit of being like fireworks with spectacular launches but they often fizzle out and fade away for lack of resources, energy and commitment.

The final phase, stewardship, is centred on transforming one off transactional events into long term sustainable relationships. Rewards and recognition are an integral part of this and the greatest error is taking support for granted.

In the old days, migration was final, brutal and sad and, in many cases today, it still is. However, now, for possibly the first time in history, absence no longer automatically equals exile and geography no longer dictates identity. People are leading hyphenated lives and living 'here' and 'there'. The world is more a mosaic than a melting pot. Brain drain can become brain gain and brain exchange. There is strong circularity to much movement between countries with people coming and going as never before. Transport and communications are making connections constant, instantaneous and intense. This is not lost on many countries and organisations with the added interesting dimension that this is a non-competitive industry – somebody going to help New Zealand or Scotland is not going to help Palestine or Portugal. Accordingly we should connect and collaborate extensively and share experiences and lessons. Diaspora development has now gone mainstream and the advantage of taking a relatively loose definition is that we can apply the term to companies, organisations and cities as well as countries. Making the term interchangeable with words like alumni opens up wider possible applications and loosens the straitjacket of strict definitions of vocabulary.

Social media has shorted the information cycle and has delivered a wonderful tool to strengthen diasporean communities regardless of location. However the deeper study of real world communities should always precede selection of platform and something truly wonderful can be created by merging the two.

# Breaking the Base #14

By Irene Gahan



## Synopsis:

People are creatures of habits and changes does not come easily but social media offers the opportunity to be disruptive.

## 4 Takeaways:

1. If you can't keep your website up-dated then consider social as a way of keeping in touch with your audience.
2. Find out where your customers are being social.
3. Don't be afraid of being disruptive and trying new social platforms.
4. The web for younger audiences is dead - long live social.

## About Irene Gahan:

Irene Gahan has been in the 'digital' industry since 1993. She currently heads up an international digital marketing agency based in Dublin. She has spoken, lectured and written on the subject of digital marketing in 5 countries over the last 10 years and lives all things digital. She was previously Chief Executive Officer of the Irish Internet Association, regularly lectures and talks about digital marketing and has just completed her MSc thesis in the Digital Consumer Behaviour Trends of Teens within a Tribal driven community.

## Contacting Irene Gahan:

You can contact Irene by [email](#).

Remember when you were a kid and played kick the can, your base was your safe house. It was where you always went back to. We are pretty similar when it comes to online.

We are creatures of habit. We don't like trying new things.



When we have invested our energy in something we will not look elsewhere, unless something completely new comes along that ticks all the boxes.

What are your base sites?

- News sites
- Online banking
- Shopping sites
- Music or entertainment sites
- Social

Marketeers are finding it hard, actually near impossible, to break the base of those core ten web sites and change habits and patterns.

As a rule we have 10 base sites that we visit daily or weekly to fulfil some practical requirement. We rarely add to that list of must-visit daily sites, except of course for social!

Social is different

This is where opportunities lie for engagement and disruption.

In particular small to medium companies that don't necessarily have the knowledge or the time to keep a site updated daily with fresh content. Facebook and Twitter are probably the best starting points for any business looking to attract consumers. Both are probably the easiest to keep up to date and fresh.

Let's go back to habit. Irish people in particular use Facebook daily as their point of reference for their social circle. Profiles have built up years of photographs, friends and posts.

Major milestones of their lives are chronicled on Facebook. The chances of some great new social disruption launching that would inspire them to abandon Facebook at this point is slim. We go back to what we know time and time again.

Facebook users will get older and older but they will be dedicated and valuable to your business if you can infiltrate news feeds with the appropriate content. The older your audience the less open to disruption they will be and the more inclined to stick to the safety of their base.

The challenge is to be disruptive within the confines of social media

If a website isn't updated with new fresh daily content then there is no major requirement to go back to it. The exception being a news, entertainment or a 'function site', which allows us to fulfil an action or requirement. For example [motortax.ie](http://motortax.ie) at most is a site that would be used every quarter. It's used for the function of paying your motor tax. It's not the kind of site that you are going to casually browse through on your lunch break.

It will get more and more difficult to break the base of websites for consumers. Social looks like it could provide the solution. Mobile social will be the making of companies that want to disrupt, particularly for younger audiences.

If the web is dying, then TV is dead and buried

If you put YouTube in the context of social it is where the kids all hang out these days. It is the new base for a new generation.

Kids are more interested in quick clips and fixes. Everything is instant and now and if it takes too long; forget it. Their attention span is contracting at an alarming pace. We will all need to speak in characters of 140 or less to grab their attention.

Purchase suggestions are being driven by social

Ask any teenager and they will tell you they spend less time watching TV and more time on their consoles, YouTube, or online watch on-demand movies and TV, all driven through social. A new Nike football boot or a must-have scarf is visual, viewed and shared.

Twitter is instant and disruptive. However, once a tweet is viewed it has already expired, unless the call to action is followed. For teens social media is where they live and play.

In four years' time that teenager will be an adult. They will expect the web and the internet to be very different things. Their base of sites will however probably be similar, but they will digest them in different ways and formats. The challenge is to keep up with your customers and break the base.

# An Amateur's Guide to Automation on Social Media and more. #15

By Eoghan O'Neill



## Synopsis:

How to use automation in social media and more. It's easier than you think!

## 4 Takeaways:

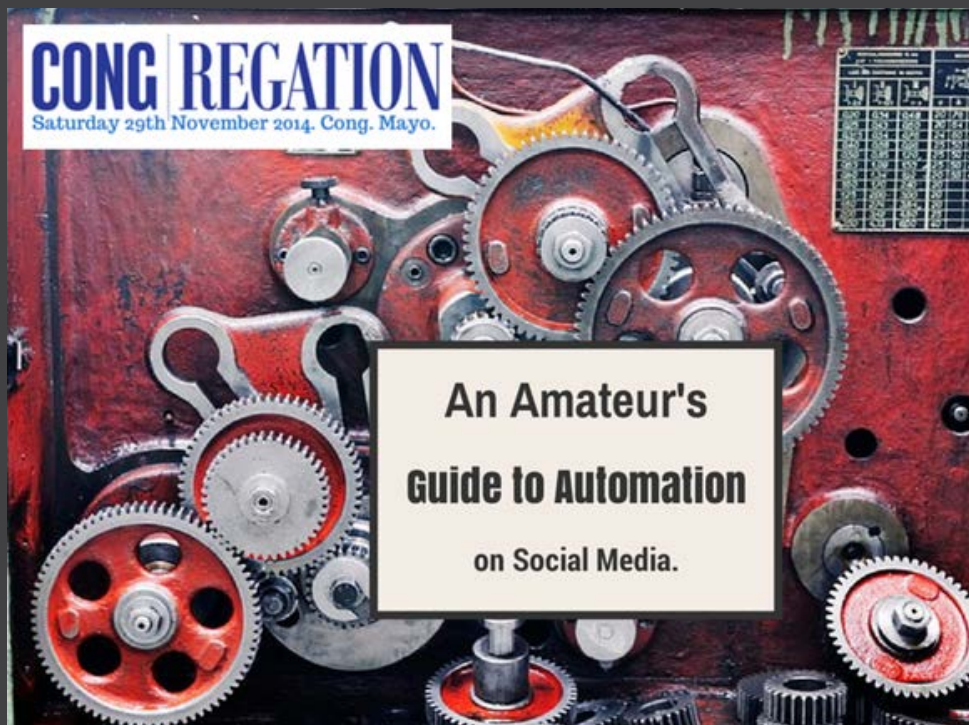
1. Social Media can be somewhat automated.
2. Downside of automation - less engagement.
3. Automation tools these days are very easy to use.
4. Social media takes a lot of time!

## About Eoin O'Neill:

Former guitar teacher now working in a startup.

## Contacting Eoin O'Neill:

You can contact Eoghan by [email](#), his personal [twitter](#) account or his [work one](#).



I recently took up a new role in a startup where I am responsible for sales, marketing, web design, social media and more. It's a classic startup role where you have to manage your time effectively and be a jack of all trades rather than a specialist at any one thing.

What I learned very quickly was that automation would be key – from automating our crm system to improving our social media presence, if you couldn't automate, you had to find a way.

For social media, here are some of my favourite tools and time savers. Some you may know, and some may surprise you.

The best social media tools (that I have found)

### Hootsuite.

Hootsuite is just great. With a free account, you can add three social media channels, which for me were facebook, twitter and linkedin. You can then pick a channel and create different views. For example, with my twitter, I have one view for my companys stream, one view for retweets and mentions and another stream that only lists the top five twitter handles that produce great content. A little overwhelming at first, but well worth the initial pain.

My favourite thing about hootsuite: Posting any new blog post to three social media channels at once. Makes it so easy and takes the minor stress of posting to multiple channels away.

### Buffer

Not [buffer.com](#), which is a rubber sealant sales site, but [bufferapp.com](#).

This one is great. With a free account, you can schedule 10 items and buffer will push them out for you automatically. Twitter only, but there's ways around that.

Favourite thing about Buffer: It automatically schedules everything for you. Select the content that's good, hit schedule and forget all about it until tomorrow.

### Klout

Pick your topics, then Klout will present you with good content. Start sharing and away you go. Very good, with a very easy setup. It also does an excellent job at telling you where you rank in your industry, and how to increase your rank.

Favourite thing about Klout: Lets you schedule your curated content at the best possible times for it to be read and engaged with.

### Zapier

This is the one you probably won't have heard of. Zapier rocks. It connects almost any two applications together. Remember how I said Buffer was only for twitter? Well with zapier, every time I retweet or favourite something on my twitter, it's automatically pushed that content out to facebook. That's just the tip of the iceberg. Very powerful.

One of my favourite things about Zapier is that it's compatible with so many different applications. If you need to integrate your crm with mailchimp, you can do it. If you need to integrate your crm with your gmail, you can do that too.

My favourite hack with zapier: Anyone who signs up to our open evenings is sent to a mailchimp list, then that list is imported into our crm using zapier. The ultimate in set it and forget it!

### IFTTT

Not specific to social media, but no automation article would be complete without it. Easily set it up to tell you what the weather is going to be like, to automatically turn your phone to silent when you're in work, or even to call you at the end of a meeting to give you an excuse to get out of there. Sounds complicated, but it's actually quite simple.

My favourite thing about IFTTT: The many thousands of integrations possible. Current favourite is automatically sending any bookmarks I make into evernote.

## Just Untag It. #16

By Caroline Lawless



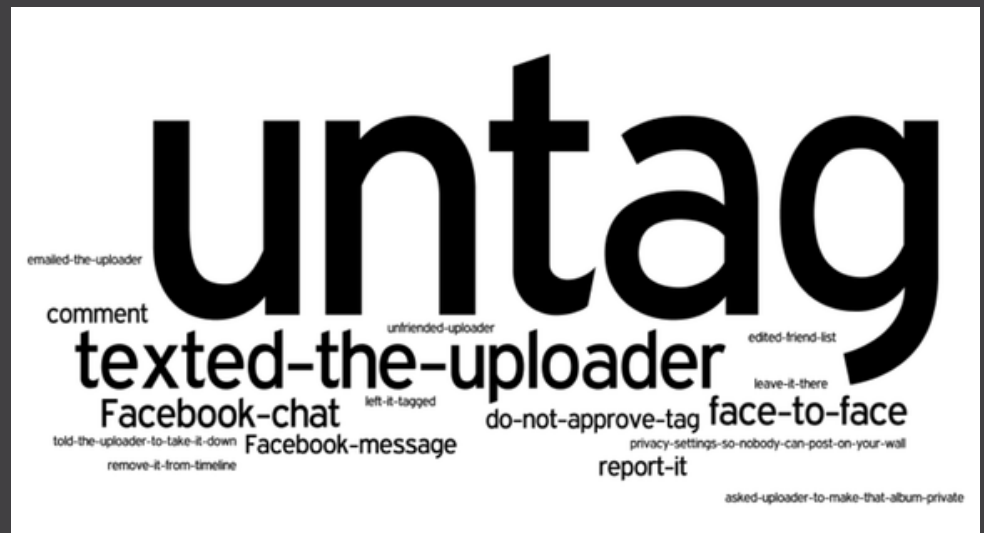
### Synopsis:

While studying Cyberpsychology I became increasingly interested in the online self and how people present themselves, and manage impressions, online. When it came to focusing on a specific topic for my thesis I decided to research online self-presentation through Facebook photos but instead of focusing on the photos that people post of themselves I decided to explore how people manage undesirable Facebook photos of themselves that are uploaded and tagged by other users. This post focuses on the most popular method that is used to manage these undesirable images according to the results of the study, untagging.

### 4 Takeaways:

1. People want to control their self-image but potentially lose this control when participating in social networking sites.
2. 84% of the participants had previously experienced an undesirable Facebook photo of themselves being uploaded and tagged by another Facebook user.
3. 75% of the participants had previously untagged an undesirable Facebook photo of themselves.
4. Within social networking sites, the dichotomous relationship between privacy violations and control over online reputation inevitably results in a trade off between privacy concerns and impression management tactics.

### Tug of War



Facebook, the most popular social networking site (SNS) in the world with 757 million daily active users, receives over 350 million image uploads every day (Facebook, 2014; [Internet.org](#), 2013; Pew Research Internet Project, 2013). Once uploaded the Facebook users featured in these photos can be tagged. This action impacts the self-presentation strategies and privacy of the tagged user as the photo is archived through the tagged users Facebook profile and can potentially be shared throughout the network with or without the knowledge or consent of the tagged user. This process can result in an online tug of war between the need to control self-presentation and the right to privacy.



In 2010 Mark Zuckerberg defended changes to Facebook's default privacy settings which resulted in the ability to see and search by user name, gender, city and other information on the assumption that "privacy is no longer a social norm (Zuckerberg, 2010 as cited by Johnson & Vegas, 2010)." Zuckerberg's statement highlights some of the negative consequences of

online self-presentation, namely, loss of control over self-image and reputation. People want to control their self-image but potentially lose this control when participating in social networking sites due to their collaborative nature. So is Zuckerberg right, have Facebook users accepted this loss of control as a by product of using social networking sites? From the results of this study it appears that Facebook users still consider privacy to be a social norm and work within the constraints of the social network to protect their online selves.

Setting Facebook to one side, Instagram and Snapchat have built, and in Twitter's case expanded, their computer-mediated communication tactics on image based exchanges. Twitter recently introduced the ability to tag any user in photos without them having to be a friend or follower. Twitter users can also disable the tag feature

## About Caroline Lawless:

Caroline is a Cyberpsychologist and works as Digital Marketer for LearnUpon, a cloud based online learning platform. Caroline joined this fast growing start up just over a year ago, while she was halfway through a part-time Masters in CyberPsychology at IADT. Prior to this she completed a B.Sc. In Multimedia in DCU after which she spent 6 years working in various customer focused digital roles within irishtimes.com and Irish Times Training. While having a young daughter, working full time and planning a wedding she managed to receive a First Class Honours in her M.Sc. in Cyberpsychology. Caroline is particularly interested in the psychological influence of the internet, social networking sites and connected technologies.

## Contacting Caroline Lawless:

You can connect with Caroline on [Twitter](#), on [LinkedIn](#). She also has her own Cyberpsychology [blog](#).

through their account so the public or people they don't follow can't tag them. Instagram is similar whereby anyone can tag you in a photo once you haven't blocked them. The privacy issues that result from these features are only going to become more prevalent, particularly with the speculated move away from open social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, to emerging "dark" social platforms, such as WhatsApp and Snapchat, where communication occurs in closed, selected groups.

One of the factors that can cause concern for users sharing photographs within Facebook is the fact that the audience spectrum can vary from friends and family members to potential employers. Users are sensitive to the diversity of their audience and moving from a public to a more private online social environment, where the audience can be selected, could result in individuals sharing photographic content that is more personal and explicit nature. Taking Snapchat as an example, the images shared user to user on this platform "self-destruct" after being viewed for up to 10 seconds by the intended recipient. However a screenshot of the image can be captured by the recipient before being reshared by them, through Snapchat or other SNS platforms, with or without the knowledge of the photo subject.

More recently "The Snapping" has highlighted the vulnerability of Snapchat user's photo exchanges to opportunistic third party "add-on" applications (Arthur, 2014).

## Management Methods

So how do people manage perceived invasions of privacy in the form of undesirable Facebook photos uploaded and tagged by other users? Nineteen individuals participated in focus group discussions on the management of undesirable Facebook photos in November and December 2013. Group sizes varied from 1 to 8 participants

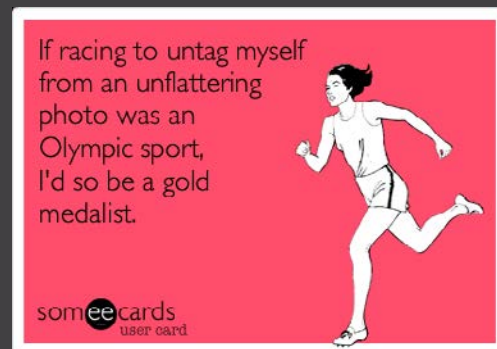
and the participants were primarily female (6 male; 13 female), aged from 18 to 64 years (18 to 24 – 7; 25 to 34 – 7; 35 to 44 – 1; 45 to 54 – 2; 55 to 64 – 2). The methods identified through the thematic analysis of the focus group transcripts fell into three categories; direct, indirect and preemptive. As this study focused on managing an undesirable photo after it had been uploaded to Facebook the preemptive methods, such as deleting photos from a camera or requesting that photos are not uploaded to Facebook, were not taken into consideration.

Meeting the uploader face-to-face to request the deletion of the photo was the only offline method discussed in the focus groups. Significantly the focus group discussions uncovered management methods which were not identified in previous studies due to their narrow focus on untagging, deletion requests, privacy settings and face-to-face confrontation (Strano & Wattai-Queen, 2012). Within Facebook, these methods indicated a creative use of the SNS to manage unwanted photos, including unfriending the uploader, commenting on the photo, and using Facebook chat or private messages to contact the uploader to request deletion or to request the photo settings were



changed to private. Outside the realm of Facebook, email and text communication methods were identified, with these methods being used to contact the uploader to request the offending photo be made private or deleted.

### Just Untag It



One hundred and twelve participants completed the online questionnaire in January and February 2014. The sample was comprised of 37 men and 75 women ( $n = 112$ ), aged from 18 to 61 with an average age of 29.54 years (18 to 24 – 41; 25 to 34 – 48; 35 to 44 – 16; 45 to 54 – 3; 55 to 64 – 4:  $SD = 9.54$ ). 84% of the participants had previously experienced an undesirable Facebook photo of themselves being uploaded

and tagged by another Facebook user. This result indicates that Facebook users frequently disrupt an individual's self-image by uploading a photograph on behalf of another user that is not in harmony with that individual's self-presentation strategies. Through this action Facebook friends, can give the show away by selecting and presenting photographs that are not in harmony with the self-presentation strategies of the subject of the photograph. The strategies, or management methods, used by victims to cope with perceived invasions of privacy, such as, untagging the image or requesting its removal, illustrate the tagged users need to regain control. The main concern for the tagged user appeared to be ensuring that the negative impression was not associated with their profile. This suggests mindfulness on the part of Facebook users in relation to content that could potentially be harmful to their future impression management strategies.

Untagging was the most popular management tactic with 75% of the sample choosing this method. Untagging a photo is an immediate action controlled by the tagged user that disassociates the image with the user's profile. It can be considered to be a discreet self-presentation tactic, as the uploader is not automatically notified that a tag has been removed from a photo they have posted. However they may notice their image has been untagged if they manually review the photo. The high percentage of participants using this tactic suggests that untagging is the most acceptable management method available to users.

In order to further dissect this result consideration must be given to the motivations behind choosing to untag undesirable photos over other management methods, and why Facebook users are satisfied with managing negative impressions of themselves through dissociation. Previous research has suggested that untagging a photo is used to avoid conflict with the uploader (McLaughlin and Vitak, 2012). The counter argument to do this would suggest that untagging an undesirable photo fulfills a need to regain control in an environment that offers its users limited control over their self-image and privacy. So have Facebook users have accepted this loss of control and privacy as a by product of using social networking sites? It could be concluded that this loss of privacy is a social norm that Facebook users are learning to live with by dissociating themselves with artefacts that depict undesirable self-representations. This dissociation results in an "out of sight, out of mind" effect whereby the photo is disconnected with the tagged users Facebook profile and timeline while remaining connected to the uploaders profile and timeline. This poses another question, if the subject of the photo is unaware

of the extent to which the undesirable photo has been viewed, shared and commented on does this make it less intrusive on their privacy? Loss of privacy is important as it affects everyone, not just those that participate actively in SNS's. These undesirable images impact the privacy of the people featured within them.

The popularity of untagging ultimately indicates that managing self-image and privacy through dissociation is sufficient for SNS users. This impression management tactic has also surfaced in other areas of the internet. Google recently introduced a link removal requests service whereby individuals can request negative online articles, in which they are named, are removed from google search results for their name.

## Conclusion

What others say about us is just as important as what we say about ourselves when it comes to self-presentation and impression management. When a Facebook user uploads an image that exposes an undesirable representation of another user they must manage that negative impression within the constraints of the online environment. Within social networking sites, the dichotomous relationship between privacy violations and control over online reputation inevitably results in a trade off between privacy concerns and impression management tactics.

The findings of this study can be used as the groundwork for future research to extend our knowledge on this important area of cyberpsychology.

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# Is This The End of Cash? #17

By Amanda Webb



## Synopsis:

Paying for stuff is becoming easier and more convenient. We are already paying for parking with our mobile phone, our taxis via an app and we don't even need to swipe our credit cards for small transactions anymore. But with this convenience comes problems. We are trading our privacy and our personal interactions to save minutes or seconds at a cash till. Is the trade off worth it or are we creating a society that no one will want to live in?

## 4 Takeaways:

1. Technology is making paying for stuff quicker and more convenient.
2. Using technology for payments makes us completely trackable. A step too far for privacy?
3. The death of cash will penalise the poor and fuel the black market
4. Faster payments could make us lonely.

## About Amanda Webb:

Amanda Webb is a social media trainer, consultant, blogger, videocaster and speaker at [www.spiderworking.com](http://www.spiderworking.com). She works with SME's to help them develop social media strategies that save time and resources. She is also the co-founder of We Teach Social and Blog Awards Ireland.

## Contacting Amanda Webb:

You can contact Amanda on [Twitter](#) or by [email](#).



Paying for stuff is becoming easier and more convenient. We are already paying for parking with our mobile phone, our taxis via an app and we don't even need to swipe our credit cards for small transactions anymore.

But with this convenience comes problems. We are trading our privacy and our personal interactions to save minutes or seconds at a cash till. Is the trade off worth it or are we creating a society that no one will want to live in?

In almost every area of my life I am a techonphile. I love gadgets and innovation and seem to have no issue sharing my information and data with Google and Facebook. I'm usually found hooked into a computer of some kind whether it's my laptop, my tablet or my phone.

There is one area of my life where I'm traditional however and that's my use of cash. Not only does it feel nice curled up in my purse, it smells of nostalgia and it has other advantages too:

1. I'm not charged per transaction. I can take cash out of the bank (for which they charge me) but then I can go and use that cash until it's all gone with no additional costs. If I use a card I get charged for every transaction I make.
2. It is welcome almost everywhere. I don't have to worry about a minimum transaction or a business with a lack of a credit card machine. My cash is always accepted. Ironically the one place my cash is rejected is a cashless bank branch.
3. It keeps me on budget. When I get cash out I have plans for how long that cash is going to last. I can keep tabs easily on how I'm doing with my budget by glancing into my purse. I don't have to wait for my balance to update, until I get to a bank or until I get online. I can just look in my bag and know.

This means:

I rarely get an unexpected credit card bill.  
I don't find my bank account dry when I go to withdraw money.  
I am on top of my spending.

## The pros of cashless payments

Everyone wants in on the payments market. Earlier in October it was discovered that Facebook is working on a payment system via its Messenger app. Apple launched 'Apple pay'. PayPal is making strong inroads into the bricks and mortar retail market, Square is making small payments via your mobile easier.

My favourite innovation has to be [Plastic](#). A card with a user interface. It stores data from all your cards allowing you to choose easily which to pay from. It will connect your phone so you can keep on top of your various cards and spending. No special technology is required, you can use it with any regular credit card terminal. Best of all you will be able to wipe it remotely if it gets lost or stolen.

There are clear advantages of these payment systems:

### 1. Convenience

We live in a time poor society. We like to cram our time full of stuff.

Waiting in a queue can make us twitchy and grumpy. We eye the person in front of us and try to gauge if they are the kind of person who will need to fumble around looking for change or have a conversation with the staff. We try to fill this wasted time by looking at Facebook or Twitter on our phones but there is no stopping that time escaping. We are in a hurry.

The act of paying with a text message, an app or the touch of a card relieves this frustration. We can bolt through the check out process and be on our way. I have to admit this is one of the attractions of the Hailo app. I can just get out of a taxi without worrying if I will have enough cash to pay.

### 2. Saves money

Cash handling costs money.

There are staff costs. A cashier needs to 'cash up' at the end of a shift to make sure everything balances. As someone who used to do this I can tell you it's much easier to print a report from the credit card machine than spend time counting coins. Then there is the time it takes a staff member to go to the bank to lodge the funds.

There are banking costs. My bank refuses to take large coin deposits except during a two hour window once a week. I imagine this is because of the staff and time required to process these transactions. This must be a nightmare for local retailers who have to send someone every week during this time period.

It costs more to lodge cash and cheques than it does to lodge your credit card payments. There is a limit to the amount of cash you can deposit by a quick lodgement machine. If you are a retailer you will need to go to the cashier and we know that the bank charges us more for this.

At the time of writing contactless payments are free to the retailer, this expires in November 2014 but it is a sign that the banks are keen that we embrace the technology.

There are also downsides

### 1. Tracking.

Apple have flagged this straight away with their system. They have told us that they won't track what we buy. This may be true at the outset but can all payment services be trusted? Can Apple?

We already worry about our privacy, our phones are already able to track us but what happens when that data is combined with every purchase that we make? We have seen how information like this can be manipulated to destroy lives. I'm sure 'Cat bin woman' is still suffering from being discovered and the sad death of 'Madeline McCann Troll' shows that even those who do have something to hide shouldn't necessarily have their identities exposed.

I believe it's time to stop believing that we have nothing to hide. I bet everyone who reads this article has something in their past that they don't necessarily want broadcast. And what happens when the goal posts are moved. Something that is acceptable today may not be acceptable tomorrow or in 10 years time. There will be no escaping our past when every move and every purchase we make is tracked.

### 2. It penalises the poor:

One system that totally destroys privacy is the proposed benefits card in the UK. I think sometimes governments forget that the unemployed aren't criminals. The proposal by the British government to pay benefits via a pre loaded cash card is designed to ensure that claimants can't spend their money on alcohol or gambling. This is quite simply unacceptable but also a reminder of what is possible if we fully embrace payment systems.

### 3. Expansion of the Black Market:

If we object to being tracked the chances are we'll find ways of buying and paying that can't be tracked. This is a huge opportunity for the black market. Cash may cease to be the currency of choice but we will find a way of trading that can't be watched.

### 4. It's robbing us of moments of personal interaction

It really gets my back up when people suggest that technology is making us antisocial. I am a huge advocate for using social media and internet tools to strengthen my personal relationships.

To be honest without my online interactions I'm likely to go stir crazy living in rural Ireland. I do however see value in person to person interaction. For some the only human contact they have is with the cashier at the local shop or the person next to them in the queue. When we use fast convenient transactions humans can be taken out of the equation. In many ways this is already happening with automated tills in supermarkets.

It's a mark of quality that my local SuperValu has no self service. We all have to queue but we are also guaranteed a smile and a bit of banter with the cashier. In a world

where more of our connections are happening online this face to face small talk could really be a lifeline to some.

In conclusion

There are some really interesting innovations in payment technology that will make our lives easier. But we need to hang on to cash. Technology in this case needs to be the alternative not the norm.

## Fear of Digital #18

By Eamonn Grant



### Synopsis:

Fear of Digital is one of the biggest reason's indigenous companies in Ireland don't sell more online. That Fear comes from a lack of awareness and understanding at the top level of business as to what digital is and what it can do for a business.

### 4 Takeaways:

1. Fear of Digital is one of the biggest reason's indigenous companies in Ireland don't sell more online.
2. Ensuring that the Executive's within companies fully understand digital is the key to getting businesses online. This is more than just teaching, it requires a willingness to learn.
3. Traditional companies are only beginning to catch up with the front runners in terms of online, but now that they are, the market is going to become more competitive.
4. People are either complimenting or complaining about you already on social channels. Not having a presence on them won't change that. Embracing social allows you to create engagement.

### About Eamonn Grant:

Eamonn set up the Made Easy Group in 2006, launching several businesses including FlowersMadeEasy.ie, WholesaleFlowers.ie & PhotoBooth.ie. He sits on the board of the Irish Internet Association and is a member of the Marketing Institute of Ireland and a part time lecturer with DIT. He regularly delivers lectures and talks



Just over 2 years ago, I got a job with probably one of the best brands in the world. In fairness to the [AA](#), they really are an amazing brand. Only a few months ago they were voted most trusted brand in the UK. As a company, they have delivered some of the most innovative solutions over the last 100 years including, a mobile mechanic service, hotel ratings and standards as well as Roadwatch & Routeplanner more recently. However, digital & mobile was something that wasn't their strong point. The single biggest obstacle if you work for a perfect brand is that those who manage it and care for it, tend to be scared and suspicious of new things and rightly so! After all, they have a brand to protect. So when people like you and I step in to a 104-year-old business it tends to cause a stir. Why risk the brand when things seem to be working well.

The irony here is this, a company who has less complaints than they do have commendations (positive testimonials) are scared of engaging. A company who is on the radio from one end of the day to the other.

The company even had a policy which prevented us having a Facebook page because of the fear that people would complain. When, in fact, people were probably already complaining on Facebook, but we as a business weren't picking up on any of that.

So it had its challenges and the biggest challenge for me was to change the mind-set. I wasn't going in there to accept the current position, which was a complete fear of digital. There was a fear of social. There was a fear of engagement. We had an imperfect understanding of where sales came from as a business. Genuinely, we had no idea where our online sales came from other than they came from the internet.

We had MI that was wrong, completely and utterly wrong. We thought, "Spend money on PPC, the tills ring." The reality was that that's not what happens. It's a multitude of different things that make a sale happen and we were only focusing on optimising one of them. So looking at sales funnels, we were focusing on this little bit down at the bottom. We were the flat fish in the sea world, eating the left overs at the bottom of the ocean. But we had over-optimized the hell out of things and forgotten the bigger

on digital topics. He runs a blog called Captivate.ie where you will find posts on topics such as the growth of physical exports from Ireland using Digital and the improvement of thought leadership at executive level within Irish companies.

### Contacting Eamonn Grant:

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You can follow Eamonn on [Twitter](#).

picture.

My objectives were clear. I needed to completely change that, to talk about social, to talk about engagement, to talk about utilizing our blog, to talk about forgetting about the front page of the website as a place for banner position arguments, and that's what has made the last 2 years really interesting for me. The challenge of changing the perception of our digital world for a big business. Hey, if I could convince my mother to launch an online company ([www.FlowersMadeEasy.ie](http://www.FlowersMadeEasy.ie)), I could convince these guys to do the same.

About 6 weeks in, in proper "100 day plan" style, having done all the reviews I could, we launched a thing called the Moneyball Report, which was an assessment of where we were digitally. We brought the entire executive down to Google HQ for a day, which was completely unheard of at that moment in time. We launched a Facebook page without telling them and showed them how great it was afterwards. One lesson I learned was to ask for forgiveness later on occasion, when you know it's the right thing to do. Don't worry, we had sign off, I wasn't a complete idiot but they didn't all know that.

Getting sacked after 6 weeks wasn't the look I was going for.

But since then, we've done lots of things differently. We brought the management of everything that we did in-house so we no longer had a PPC agency. We no longer had an SEO agency. We did it all in-house. Why? Because we wanted to educate the business as to what it was that PPC did and what the cause and effect of SEO was. The only way for us to do this was to bring it in-house to ensure everyone who needed to know understood what these things meant.

We wanted to talk about click-through rates. We wanted to talk about what was involved in getting to position one, two, and three in SEO, and we are there now. We're in the top three for every major term we want to be top 3 for. That was unheard of two years ago. We were page 2. That has come about by a willingness to embrace digital, a willingness to understand and learn about it and how we as a business can ensure we are doing everything we can to improve our presence and engagement online.

Fear of the unknown is what most people suffer from when they talk about fear. Fear of something they don't know the outcome of. Fear of something they can't see or fear of something they don't understand. It's really easy for us tech digital types to talk all the acronyms we want, but we need to start understanding that "Fear of Digital" is the reason for those who don't get it and aren't doing it.

Getting businesses online is no good without educating the owners as to what that means, what SEO means, what Social means. And not just a 1 hour class on how this stuff works, but what it means to them, what it means to their business. If they understood that or more importantly, when they do understand that level of detail about what this digital thing is all about, that's when commerce and retail will get really interesting.

It hasn't fully happened yet but it's going to happen. The "Fear of Digital" will one day be a thing of the past. Banks, Insurance companies, retailers every high street business will no longer be scared. They will embrace it and those who do will succeed.

Big Ass Brands won't be scared of digital once they understand it.

# It's all about Twitter; oh naw, it isnae, oh aye it is #19

By Billy MacInnes



## Synopsis:

The referendum on Scottish Independence indicated a seismic shift in the political landscape in Scotland. Although the No campaign won, the big increase in the Yes vote showed that social media can help generate political momentum. And it still is.

## 4 Takeaways:

1. Social media enables political campaigns to create significant momentum but without wider media support it isn't enough – yet
2. Social media platforms can mobilise groups to quickly and effectively counter misleading or inaccurate claims but their success will be limited if they cannot get coverage from older media platforms
3. You can very quickly lose sight of the overall picture when you get swept up in the social media echo chamber
4. The positive characteristics of social media platforms can provide a strong foundation for a more hopeful and engaged political future.

## About Billy MacInnes:

Freelance editor/journalist/trainer Billy MacInnes is a former editor of MicroScope magazine. He has written about the IT industry, for a number of publications, for more than 20 years.

## About Billy MacInnes:

You can [email](#) Billy or follow him on [Twitter](#).

On 18th September, the people of Scotland voted in a referendum asking whether it should become an independent country or remain within the UK. On the morning of 19th September, it became clear that 55% of those who voted had opted to keep the status quo. Despite some high drama in the last ten days of the campaign

after one opinion poll put the Yes camp in front, prompting the three main party leaders in the UK to issue a front page 'Vow' of **greater devolved powers to Scotland** on the front page of the country's biggest selling tabloid (The Daily Record), the outcome was consistent with nearly every other opinion poll in the month preceding the vote.



True, there had been a significant narrowing in the gap between the two sides in the preceding 12 months but those opposed to independence still enjoyed a lead of between 4 to 10 points leading up to the vote. As a Scotsman who believed passionately in the cause of independence, shaped to some degree by my experience of living in Ireland, the morning of 19th September was a terrible disappointment and something of a shock. Why a shock? Because I believed the momentum had shifted significantly towards the Yes side in the preceding fortnight.

Part of the reason I felt a seismic shift had taken place (and to be honest, it had happened but just not to the degree I thought it had) was because of the massive Yes presence online and on social media, especially Twitter. In a campaign where every single newspaper in Scotland (none of which was Scottish-owned) was firmly in the No camp and the bulk of radio and TV coverage appeared anti-Yes, social media was one of the few platforms where the pro-independence campaign enjoyed a distinct advantage. In fact, so successful was the Yes campaign in exploiting online and social media that it even gave rise to the pejorative term "Cybernat" although detractors usually prefaced it with terms like "vicious" or "trolling" or "notorious".

From my admittedly biased viewpoint, I thought there was at least as much abuse, if not more, from the incredibly negative campaign run by the No side which seemed engaged in an increasingly preposterous arms race over just how devastating the consequences of a Yes vote would be for Scotland, the UK, Europe, the Free World and the Universe (although not always in that order).

Living in Ireland gave me a less Manichean perspective on the prospects of Scottish independence. After all, if a small nation like Ireland with virtually nothing could come out of a bloody war of independence and a civil war and survive, why couldn't an equally small nation with huge oil reserves as well as fantastic wind and wave power

prospects not prosper after a peaceful vote to stand on its own two feet?

The problem, of course, was not that it couldn't survive but that the No campaign convinced enough people that it couldn't. It did so primarily by targeting the voting groups most likely to vote and least likely to change. And it did this by using the established (and conservative) platform of old mainstream media: newspapers, TV and radio.

Those in the Yes camp who believed victory was in sight made the cardinal error of losing sight of the fact a large part of the prospective electorate did not engage online or with social media platforms at all. Yes supporters issued rapid rebuttals on Twitter and Facebook to what they saw as highly misleading messages from the No camp in the mainstream media and believed this was helping to blunt the effectiveness of those messages. They were understandably proud of the speed with which they could mobilise to counter the latest scare story from the No campaign but failed to see that it meant nothing.

Any satisfaction they may have felt about their ability to fight back against the mainstream media was misplaced because they failed to understand none of that work was having any effect on the core groups of people who had been targeted by the No camp. The mainstream media wasn't giving their rebuttals equal prominence to the stories the Yes camp was trying to refute (assuming it gave them any space at all). The Yes side thought it was winning on the battlefield but didn't realise the enemy was busy winning the war while it was looking the other way.

The major lesson to be learnt from the process is that social media can make a difference (and there's no doubt that without it the Yes side would not have performed as well as it did) but, right now, it's not enough to carry the day.

Nevertheless, despite the intense disappointment I felt on the morning of 19 September, I find myself feeling fairly positive about the future prospects of an independent Scotland. Why? First, because the Yes campaigners, unlike those on the No side, have not gone away. They are not a one day army, disbanding and disengaging, returning to business as usual. Instead, they are doing their best to remain engaged and trying to ensure change will occur in the Scottish political landscape, even if it's not quite as far-reaching as they initially hoped.

They are no longer confined to the social media echo chamber. The pro-independence parties have seen significant increases in party membership since the vote. In fact, membership of the Scottish National Party (SNP) has more than trebled to 80,000, making it the third largest party by membership in the whole of the UK. Green Party membership in Scotland has risen from 1,700 to more than 7,000. Significantly, the people most vocal about the UK party leaders living up to their Vow are not No voters but Yes campaigners.

So while the No side won this time, there is less depth and conviction to its support. It is not a movement, it's a barrier. The old media won the day using the traditional top-down, one to many approach that has worked so many times before. But the reach and effectiveness of the mainstream media will inexorably decline as new platforms emerge to challenge and displace it and as the generations who rely on newspapers, TV and radio as their primary and trusted source for news and information fade away.

The 45% who voted Yes are not going away. Instead, they are busy building on the political platform online and social media provided to them. People involved in the Yes campaign have come to appreciate the more democratic nature of social media where they are able to communicate with each other, to ask their own questions, to share information and to feel part of a community. Most important of all, they are connected, they are engaged and they are positive. Isn't that what social media is supposed to be all about?

# Speaking - The Most Social of Social Media #20

By Johnny Beirne



## Synopsis:

As social media usage mushrooms the unique opportunities that public speaking offers can be forgotten.

## 4 Takeaways:

1. Public speaking builds stronger relationships.
2. It creates engaging social media content.
3. It delivers a unique engagement opportunity.
4. Be specific about what you want you to talk about.

## About Johnny Beirne:

Based in Carrick on Shannon, Johnny provides training & mentoring in the areas outlined below.

He is co-founder of The Digital Business Institute and Speakific.

Past projects have included downloadmusic.ie and TEXT A TRACK.

He has 14 years business experience in Business Management, Information/Communication Technology and Business Innovation. Areas of expertise include:-

- Innovation for the Small Business (Innovation Officer for Leitrim County Enterprise Board for 3 years)
- Professional Networking – online and offline (See Business Networks below)
- Maximising business benefits of the Internet



As business owners we are always looking for ways to promote both our personal and business brand.

Great and all as Social Media is, human interaction builds stronger relationships. From a business perspective, guest/public speaking is ideal for such interaction. It gives you an opportunity to showcase your expertise, add value by sharing your experience and is excellent for education-based marketing.

The preparation you do and the content you create for your speaking engagement is ideal for sharing using Social Media:

The content of your talk can be used as a blog post for your blog and/or a guest blog post on another blog. You can then share links to the blog post on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

Congregation really gets this and takes it to the next level where you must write a blog post to attend.

You also benefit greatly from people tweeting about your blog post in addition to people live tweeting excerpts as you deliver your talk.

You could also consider recording your talk audio and video and sharing that on SoundCloud and YouTube.

The challenge of course is a fear of public speaking.

A friend of mine once said "I'd prefer to eat my own kidney than speak in public". And although many people may feel this way, overcoming



- Website 'Health Check' Clinics (See Website Clinics)
- Social Media & Conversation Marketing (incl. Blogging for Business)
- Public Speaking – events have included BizCamp Dublin, Open Coffee Sligo, Leitrim Business Network, Sligo Women in Business Network

In 2008 he won an IIA NetVisionary Award for Mobile Innovation with [downloadmusic.ie](http://downloadmusic.ie).

## About Johnny Beirne

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You can follow Johnny on [Twitter](#), like him [Facebook](#) or visit his [website](#).

this fear as a business owner can be vital to the success of your business.

First and foremost it is important that you have an area of expertise that people will be interested in hearing about. You must be able to offer them some help or solve a problem. In saying this most business owners have had their ups and downs, faced adversity, made the hard calls and with these come experience and knowledge that can be shared.

So let's assume you are reading this and thinking "I don't see how this can help my business".

Here's How:

The fact that you are standing in front of a group of people ready to relay your knowledge, immediately puts you in the limelight as an expert in what you do. It gives your audience the chance to gain insight from a real life story that cannot be found in any textbook or blog. Your audience are there because they want to be there and are interested. This helps build your profile as well as the profile of your business and puts this in the mind of potential customers.

Most of your marketing will be done online or in print so it can be refreshing to actually get in front of some real people. Ideally you should engage with your audience to enhance the whole experience. Ask questions and start a conversation. The beauty of this is that you will gain instant feedback. I mentioned previously that the audience gain an insight into your expertise but on the other hand you can gain valuable insight from your audience's comments and reactions.

Once you have done your first public appearance and it has gone well your self-confidence will grow. And inevitably it becomes easier the second and third time. This confidence gained can carry over into other aspects of your business such as networking or presenting to clients.

These are 3 key reasons to consider becoming a guest speaker for your business. So now what?

Start by identifying what you would like to speak about and be specific. Remember it should be an area of expertise or a specific story. Then try to find events to speak at locally. It is a good idea to contact your local chamber of commerce or business network group and offer your services. You will be surprised how difficult these groups find it to locate suitable speakers for certain local workshops or seminars.

# Good content - and what I've learned on a reluctant journey towards social media engagement #21

By Simon Moynihan



## Synopsis:

Many people are reluctant social media participants but good content that engages can really drive results if backed by data and useful insights.

## 4 Takeaways:

1. Good content need to stand out.
2. Let the data speak for itself.
3. Negative and positive engagement should be welcomed.
4. Great content can build media profile..

## About Simon Moynihan:

A founding member of bonkers. ie, Simon Moynihan has driven the company's Communications and PR strategy across print, broadcast and online media since 2010. bonkers.ie is now firmly established as a trusted media source for comment and content across a range of topics, with the founders regularly contributing to popular broadcast productions.

Prior to bonkers, Simon spent four years managing partner and customer relationships for UK price comparison services, giving him a unique knowledge of the price comparison and switching market.

Simon's consumer finance background includes managing the training and compliance team at Patelco, a full service financial institution



Let me start by leaving my baggage at the door...

I've never been much for social media. I find Facebook frightening, it took me a long time to learn the language of Twitter, and I'd give up on Google Plus altogether if I could. Now these are not the words you would expect from a so-called content marketer, but there it is.

I've found that I'm not alone in this either. A certain social media anxiety exists for many people in business – even online business – and it's especially prevalent amongst the generation that came of age pre-dotcom. We can be a pretty private bunch. We don't like people knowing what we're up to and we're just not comfortable broadcasting our thoughts, lives and dreams to the world.

What I do know though is that thousands of my potential customers don't share my social-media-phobia. They are active participants in the social media phenomenon - and where they are is where we need to be too.

And if you want to be followed, liked, shared, favoured, re-tweeted and commented upon; and ultimately engage with your customers in an ongoing and meaningful manner, you really need to have something interesting to say that your customers will want to read, share and even talk about.

And the king of that "something" is good content.

Alright sure, we all know that content is king already... but good content - your content - is what can be the difference between being part of the noise and standing out from the crowd.

Your content is what makes you who you are. It's what gives your business its

and California's largest credit union. Simon's experience also includes management at Directv Broadband and AT&T Internet (formerly Pacific Bell Internet).

### Contacting Simon Moynihan:

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You can follow Simon's insights on the Bonkers.ie [blog](#), follow him on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) or [Google+](#). You can also [email](#) Simon.

personality. It's a great way to get your message out to the world, and most importantly - it's a huge part of how your customers can find you, engage with you and ultimately buy from you.

Your content really can be that powerful.

Let me speak a little from my personal experience here... When [bonkers.ie](#) was founded, we make a decision to have an active blog. We devised a rough outline around what the blog would be like, we analysed who our customers were likely to be and then we began creating articles.

We wrote about all sorts of things, but we always tried to keep our customers in mind. Who are they? What are their concerns? What do they want? What are they interested in?

And so we wrote about the products that we listed. We gave our take on the news of the day. We reviewed new products, we analysed data and we gave our opinion. We gave "best of" awards and we even did traditional top ten lists.

As long as it was loosely relevant to our outline, almost nothing was off limits. BUT we had one mantra throughout which was "let the data speak for itself". This gave us immense freedom in what we wrote, but it also put some sensible constraints on us. When we said something was the best - it was because we'd crunched the numbers and were able to prove that it was. If someone made a statement that was mostly BS, we'd crunch the numbers and prove that it really was BS.

So back to social media...

Armed with some decent content, we now had something to say. We had our business personality mixed in with a little bit of opinion and so we hit the social media circuit and told people about it. It took time to build up interest, but it also meant that we could curate content that was similar to ours along the way - giving us even more to say.

After a while, people became interested. Then they engaged, and commented and gave their own opinions. Sometimes they were kind, sometimes they were unkind, but they were engaged which was what we wanted.

This engagement, which brought people back to our content (and ultimately our site) sparked a little interest from the media too. We were asked to write for online and print publications. We were asked for comment and opinion, and it helped to get the name of a cash-strapped start-up into the public eye. And thus we began to establish ourselves as thought leaders in our field.

All because of good content? No of course not. You need to be backed up by a good product too, but the content has sure helped us out along the way.

### My two cent on content creation

Write about what you know and keep it loosely relevant to your business. This is old advice, but its age has no reflection on its value.

Think your business isn't interesting enough to write about? Sure it is. Check out the content on the sites of your contemporaries. Some will be crap, some will be mediocre, but some will be very very good. And it's the good stuff that you can really learn from.

If you decide to start, you should commit. Nothing looks worse than a blog or a newsfeed that stopped dead six months ago.

Be on the lookout for ideas and write them down. You may not use them right away but when you're stuck for something to write, you can go back to your ideas list. Which brings me to this:

Try to be regular. You don't need to stick to a rigid schedule and sometimes your job just gets in the way of your content creation, but do try to set aside some time to write.

Mix it up. You don't always have to write about your business. There's loads happening out there, and you may have a unique take on the events of the day. Why not share your opinion? Some of the most popular pieces we've put up on [bonkers.ie](#) had very little to do with our company or the products we list.

There's more than one way to skin a cat. I'm writing about writing here because that's what I know. But there's loads of other ways to create great content. Like to talk? Create a podcast. Have actual tangible products? Do video reviews. Good with a camera or know your way around the layers in Photoshop? Well, then you've got the makings of some very powerful content indeed.

And finally - Stick with it. After a while you'll have a good back catalogue of stuff, people will come, Google will start to like you more, and all of a sudden you might find that you're a content marketer without ever needing to know just exactly what that is!

# The Cloud is a Terrible Thing to Waste on Content #22

By Sean McGrath



## Synopsis:

The first 25 years of the web evolution have focused on removing the need for IT specialist skills in contributing to the web and hosting content on the web. Social media has played a huge part in that. The web itself is transforming into a much more dynamic "host" for computing. It is not just for static web pages any more. It is for hosting applications as well as content. Yet application creation and hosting remains the domain of IT specialists. The next big evolutionary shift will be to make application creation/deployment as easy for non-IT specialists as social media is today.

## 4 Takeaways:

1. The next big leap on the Web will be around personal automation. Allowing non-IT specialists to automate tasks 24x7
2. The big problem to be solved is making a useful subset of automation tasks accessible to non-IT specialists
3. Programming languages - no matter how verbose or concise, will never be a mainstream method of getting computers to do work for "normal" people
4. The answer, I believe, is co-creation paradigms in games engines. Harnessing the concept of Events to integrate game-worlds as automation engines on the public cloud and on Personal Clouds

## About Sean McGrath:



Social media is largely responsible for the now commonplace notion that your stuff can be hosted "out there" on the cloud. Thanks to mobile apps and browsers, you no longer need to even have your own computer to be present in this cloud. Thanks to blogging platforms and social networks you most definitely do not need to be a computer programmer or HTML maven to have that presence. The progress made in the first 25 years of the Web in opening it up to non-IT specialists has been incredible.

But is that it? Does this egalitarian stop with publishing stuff? Is that what "presence" means? Is that what this oft-abused word "cloud" is for? I think not. I believe the next big wave - the next 25 years - will be a much more powerful form of "presence" in the form of end-use controlled autonomous agents. We are heading towards a re-conceptualization of cloud in which "presence" has an active component. We will not just publish content to the cloud. We will publish instructions. These instructions will execute 24x7 on our behalf. Scheduling tasks, reacting to events so that we do not have to be there to do the reacting.

Arriving at this idea is a simple matter of extrapolating from what has happened over the 25 year history of egalitarianization of the web. First came the so called "static" pages. Then came so-called dynamic pages via "CGI scripts". Then came various forms of Application Servers in which entire websites consist of dynamically executing code, running 24x7 that occasionally generated pages for browsers to look at.

Each phase of this evolution has started in IT-specialist territory and gradually become accessible to non-IT specialists. At first you needed to be a programmer to create a web page. Later, anybody could do it. At first, you needed to be a programmer to create a web-site server and host it. Later anybody could do it. At first, you needed to be a programmer to automate something - even simple things - if you wanted to leave it running 24x7 in the cloud. Later....

....That is where we are at today. The obvious next big step, I believe, is for \*everyone\*

**Sean McGrath. Blogging from Ireland** since 2002. Based in Galway now.

### Contacting Sean McGrath:

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You can contact Sean through [email](#).

to be able to get the cloud to do things for them 24x7. The zeitgeist is forming around the idea of personal, event-centric 24x7 automation. Personal Clouds/Personal Event Networks[1], Clay Shirky' Situational Applications[2], Doc Searls' The Intention Economy[3], all point to this.

There is just one snag...powerful automation today is almost exclusively the domain of IT-specialists. It requires programming. What form of programming will personal clouds need? Certainly not Cobol (which was designed for "normal" people!) Certainly not Python or C#. A paradigm shift is needed. Something as seismic as the invention of the spreadsheet which, in one pivotal moment, moved a whole class of automation tasks out of the development department and in to the hands of end-users.

I don't have a fully-worked-out answer but I have a very strong inclination as to where the answer will come from.

Games.

In particular platform games based on co-creation. For the majority of situational application scenarios for Personal Clouds, there is a triggering event. What if that event manifested itself in a gameworld as some sort of object? What if, through co-creation paradigms, end-users could dictate how the gameworld responds to the new event/object? What if events could flow in to, and out of, game-worlds as event streams so that game-worlds could interconnect with each other and impact external services via APIs?

Would that be a powerful form of end-user automation capability? Yes. Would it feel like programming? No. Would it vastly (and I mean \*vastly\*) expand the number of people in the world who could automate stuff to run 24x7 out there on the cloud? Absolutely.

## United breaks guitars but nobody cares #23

By Gareth Dunlop



### Synopsis:

United doesn't break guitars. It broke Dave Carroll of little-known Canadian Country and Western outfit Sons of Maxwell's guitar. Maybe they just reached the same conclusion that the rest of us reached some time ago, that the world has enough Canadian Country and Western music already. The social media revolution is not in the catchy headlines, it is in the in the mundane humdrum.

### 4 Takeaways:

1. It is difficult to find a social media faux pas of any lasting impact.
2. Consumers are still cheap if organisations get their 4Ps right.
3. We are all fed up with our self-obsessed friends on social networks who are always whining.
4. Celebrities and thought leaders are still hugely disproportionately important in ascertaining reputation.

### About Gareth Dunlop:

Following 15 years of direct commercial experience helping businesses use the Internet more effectively, Gareth established Fathom in September 2011 to advise companies on how to get the most from the web by seeing the world from the perspective of their customers.

Previously Gareth was the MD of iON, a leading digital strategy and marketing company, headquartered in Belfast and with major clients in 15



The poster children of the social media revolution may have reached adolescence but still have plenty of growing up to do. United breaks guitars but people still fly with them. FedEx lobs expensive monitors over the iron gates and gets caught on CCTV but people still send packages with them. Ryanair garners 1m negative comments on Facebook (surely the dislike button needs to be added, if for them alone?) for people giving off about a 60 Euro charge for printing out a boarding pass at the airport but people still travel with the airline.

And so it goes on; the people have spoken famously against Pizza Hut, KFC, Burger King, Snickers, Honda, Natwest, Starbucks, GoDaddy and Habitat however the people not-so-famously still eat, drive, drink and buy the products and services which those companies purvey. Sure, the various social media challenges they've faced have been embarrassing, and they shouldn't have happened, however they are far from the "disasters" that the blogosphere would have you believe they are.

A well-timed follow-up press release or a Tiger-Woods-esque tearful statement from a humbled CEO, and equilibrium is apparently restored.

No-one is pretending that these things are good for the organisations in question, or that their reputation is enhanced by it, but one is left pondering if anyone gives a damn about the fact that this stuff has happened. Or do enough people give a damn in enough numbers for us to assert that these occurrences have impacted brand reputation materially or negatively influenced sales? I doubt it.

Or to ask the question another way, how many randomers on social networks does it take to have the same impact as a single Which article?

Perhaps I'm just rallying against my own social media group. Within my own Twitter and Facebook circles, I often read "F\*\*k you [insert airline here], I had a big meeting in London today and your cancelled flight means I won't make it. WE ARE TRYING TO DO WIN BUSINESS." or "Do NOT eat at [insert restaurant here], I knew from the minute we arrived that the waitress didn't like my new hair-style, and the Irish coffee was made with an inferior whiskey" or my own personal bête-noire (admittedly only marginally related to the topic at hand) "Here is a picture of little Johnny winning the

countries. Prior to that he was the MD of Tibus, one of the largest and most successful web development agencies in Ireland, from 2002 to 2009 when it was sold to UTV Media. Since 1996, he has gained massive commercial experience advising blue chip clients in Ireland, UK and Europe (Fáilte Ireland, SOCITM, SPAR, DHL, Post Office UK, BBC) on Internet strategy and best practice.

A former Board Member of the Irish Internet Association, and Chairman of WeddingsOnline.ie, Gareth writes & lectures extensively on Internet related matters. As well as speaking regularly for University of Ulster, Digital Marketing Institute, Irish Internet Association, Irish Times and Sure Skills, he has guest lectured for UCD, DCU and DIT. He occupies regular columns in SiliconRepublic.com and Business Eye magazine.

### Contacting Gareth:

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You can follow Gareth on his [personal](#) and [work](#) Twitter accounts or [email](#) him.

cup. Don't know where he gets his good looks, brains, talent, sporting ability etc from. #chipofftheoldblock".

I bet you see those kinds of posts on your Twitter feed and Facebook newsfeed too, yes? And like me, I bet your social contacts who write that stuff are the self-obsessed, whose lives seem full of first world problems #valetparkingveryslowoutsidethecheeseseshoptoday?

The harsh reality would appear to be that we remain too cheap to really care too much about occasional organisational faux-pas and that if businesses still offer us the right product in the right place at the right price which has been well promoted, we'll buy.

The power pendulum, which pre-Internet was swinging firmly on the side of the organisation has of course swung firmly towards the customer. However that power isn't exercised in the headline grabbing broken guitars of United or by individuals giving off about grounded flights, or by Honda getting caught asking staff to say great stuff about their cars, or by Starbucks responding to a comedian who said their coffee smells of toilet.

Rather, influence is exercised in the humdrum business of comments, ratings, and reviews for products and services on e-commerce and third party review sites. Even then, it only impacts reputation materially when customers comment in adequate numbers.

It is of course better for organisations if these comments, ratings and reviews are positive rather than negative, however a celebrity endorsement or positive review from an authority figure still trumps thousands if not millions of comments from the average punter.

So United doesn't break guitars. It broke Dave Carroll of little-known Canadian Country and Western outfit Sons of Maxwell's guitar. Maybe they just reached the same conclusion that the rest of us reached some time ago, that the world has enough Canadian Country and Western music already.

Gareth Dunlop owns and runs Fathom, a user-experience consultancy which helps ambitious organisations get the most from their website and internet marketing by viewing the world from the perspective of their customers. Specialist areas include user-testing, usability and customer journey planning, web accessibility and integrated online marketing. Clients include Invest NI, Power NI, 3 Mobile, Ordnance Survey Ireland, and Independent News and Media. Visit Fathom online at [fathom.pro](http://fathom.pro).

# The Game Has Changed - Social Media in a Time of Crisis. #24

By Myles Mc Hugh



## Synopsis:

Reputations very often live and die on how effectively an organisation deals with a crisis. In the "old days" it was possible to delay the response to a crisis to allow enough time to prepare a response. Now with social media, the "Golden Hour" is no longer available to us. A clear crisis management plan is needed. It needs to be tested, evaluated, re-tested, re-evaluated and refined. We dissect a crisis, which occurred in 2010 with Qantas Air in Singapore. The lessons from this case are best summed up by the comment of the Qantas CEO Alan Joyce. "We were ready for traditional media, and we had a press conference by 4 o'clock that afternoon, which I fronted. And we had our press statement out within half an hour of us knowing the issue. But we'd missed this whole [social media] end of communication".

## 4 Takeaways:

1. With the advent of social media, the game in crisis management has changed. The power has shifted from the organisation to the individual.
2. Citizen journalism demands a different response.
3. The changing game requires new strategies. Speed of response along with honesty and empathy are now essential requirements.
4. Know what "your crisis" is likely to be and plan for the outcome as if you were planning for an airline crisis.

## About Myles McHugh:



Many of the most recent PR crises are not being dealt with effectively by the organisations and have rumbled on and on. We see the manifestations of these crises in the traditional media such as newspapers, radio and TV. Most businesses and large organisations are well aware of the need to plan for a crisis and many have crisis plans in place. Why then are so many organisations struggling to deal with controversies and crises? The answer is very simple. The game has changed. The power has shifted from the organisation to the individual. Social media and citizen journalism has changed the game forever.

In former times the game was fairly simple. The "old ways" included attempts to evade responsibility, to minimise the story, to deny culpability and in many cases to shut down the flow of information. Airlines for example had traditionally assumed a period of time to check facts and prepare their position. It was commonly referred to as the "Golden Hour".

The power is now with the individual. Citizen journalism has emerged. Blogs, Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and other social media now allow the individual to reach a global audience immediately. The old rules no longer apply.

## Some Lessons

In dealing with the new reality, here are some key lessons for companies who are now fighting for space in the social realm with individuals.

1. Response Speedily.
2. An early response even when you have limited news is better than no response.
3. Be Honest - If you Don't Know, Don't Spoof.
4. If you don't have the facts, say so and promise to share them when they become available.
5. Express Regret.

Myles is a Galwegian, living in Oranmore. He provides training and advice to companies in the areas of Media Relations, Customer Service Management and Strategy. He lectures in Marketing and Communications at Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT). He is an experienced management professional with over 38 years of management experience and was a senior manager in Iarnród Éireann prior to his retirement in 2012. He has held senior positions in strategic management, customer relations, media communications and marketing strategy.

### Contacting Myles:

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You can contact Myles by [phone](#), follow him on [Twitter](#), [email](#) him or visit his [website](#).

6. It never hurts to say you are sorry even when the lawyers don't want you to.
  7. Don't Cede Control- Be Aware of the Need for Clear Accurate Information.
  8. Be the leader with the information. Better to have the public re-tweeting your news than you playing catch up.
  9. Recognise that the Audience now is Producing Content and Assert Yourself in New Media.
  10. Monitor What is Being Said.
  11. Be Consistent across All Channels.
  12. Plan, Plan , Plan.
  13. Do not create a plan and put it on the shelf until you really need it. Plan, test, practice, evaluate, re-test, re-evaluate, evolve and refine it.
- Crisis Case Study – Qantas Air

If you want to get an appreciation of the new reality, there is no better example that a Crisis at an Airline. This example has been cited by International Air Transport Association (IATA) as a case study on how not to deal with a Crisis. They were to find out that the "Golden Hour" no longer exists.

On 4th November 2010, Qantas Flight 32, operated by an Airbus A380 suffered an uncontained engine failure four minutes into the flight. over Batam



Island, Indonesia. Falling debris injured one person on the ground. The aircraft remained airborne for 1hr 39 minutes while crew assessed damage and dumped fuel before returning for an emergency landing at the originating airport.

### Timeline:

- 40 minutes after the engine failure, while the aircraft is still airborne, a 24-hour TV news channel reports "breaking news" of an explosion overhead a populated area. 6 minutes later, first "tweet" by a viewer about an "aircraft crash", identifying the location. This starts a flood of tweets from other users talking of an "aircraft explosion", which alerts other news organisations to the story.
- Within 15 minutes, AP newswire quotes local police chief confirming aircraft debris found – this report "re-tweeted" by a CBS News producer in New York. 20 minutes later, Bloomberg identifies the airline. Every major international news organization was now following the story.
- Photos of aircraft debris posted on Flickr, appearing to show the airline's logo – numerous responses confirm the airline's identity.
- 1hr 27 minutes after the event, Reuters reports "breaking news" of a crash, identifying both the airline and the aircraft type.
- 12 minutes later, aircraft lands safely at the originating airport, despite suffering significant structural damage. Passengers with smartphones almost immediately start uploading photos, videos and commentary onto Social Media channels.
- 2 hours after the engine failure occurred (and 20 minutes after it landed), the airline issues its first statement, confirming the safe emergency landing and denying the aircraft has crashed. CEO of Qantas Alan Joyce was quoted: "We were ready for

traditional media, and we had a press conference by 4 o'clock that afternoon, which I fronted. And we had our press statement out within half an hour of us knowing the issue. But we'd missed this whole [social media] end of communication".

Following a review of the communications in the industry, IATA recommended that organisations develop their Social Media policy in "peacetime" and not attempt to engage with online audiences "piecemeal" in the midst of a crisis. There is no doubt that social media has changed the game for the management of crises. The challenge for organisations is to respond.

# Conducting Smart Market Research using Facebook. #25

By Shane O'Leary



## Synopsis:

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A guide to using Facebook advertising and graph search hacks to better understand your market.

## 4 Takeaways:

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1. Facebook's effectiveness is decreasing for marketers.
2. But it can still be used by smart marketers for research purposes.
3. Use Facebook adverts to narrow down your target market.
4. Switch to Facebook Graph Search to find out about the preferences of your fans and fans of competitors.

## About Shane O'Leary:

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Shane O'Leary is a Dublin based agency planner, tech journalist, freelance digital brand consultant and blogger.

## Contacting Shane O'Leary:

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You can follow Shane on [Twitter](#) or contact him by [email](#).



For all the plus points of social media and the debate over whether Facebook is worth investing in, one of the key benefits of the site has been forgotten by many marketers.

We leave trails of very interesting data behind us every time we log into the Facebook platform, and thus, there's a wealth of information available. Oh, and did I mention that you don't always have to pay for it? Using Facebook advertiser and a few simple hacks, you can gather plenty of insights into your market and its habits, likes and dislikes. Firstly, let's take a look at Facebook advertising.

Simply by going to [facebook.com/advertising](https://facebook.com/advertising) and choosing to create an advert, you can narrow down your target market and help to define your 'fan bullseye'. For example, if I'm thinking about creating a new app targeted to college going males, I can narrow my targeting down to males, aged 18-24, who are currently attending college. I can then drill down even further, by choosing to target by device or platform, meaning I can then understand whether I should be building on Android or iOS. Simple, crude, but effective! Other options here would include an option to target specific network connections (3g or 4g), or at a broader level, I can check how many of my fans or fans of competitors pages have kids, are married, went to college etc. This is the sort of information that would cost you hundreds to get from a market research company, and is available with a simple bit of mining.

Along with advertising, Facebook 'Graph Search' is another gem that many overlook. Though it's not strictly speaking available to people on this side of the water, a quick switcheroo will take care of that. To switch from normal Facebook search (a limited tool that's being phased out) to the new graph search, all you need to do is change the language on your Facebook account to American English.

Click the little silver wheel in the top right corner when logged into your personal profile, go to Settings and simply edit language to 'English (US)'. It should only take a few minutes to change over. Graph search opens up a whole of opportunities to find out more about your fans and potential customers on Facebook.

For example, search for a term like 'favourite interests of people who like [PAGE NAME]' and you'll get an interesting list of brands that you might look to interact with, partner with or even compete with.

You can also identify the pages that your fans like, identifying potential opportunities for partnerships, and gain a better insight into your fan bullseye's behaviour. For local

businesses, if you're a cafe in close proximity to a large org like Google or Facebook for example, you can use Graph Search to find out which employees of that business like services or products related to yours. Searchers can also create different combinations of queries to sort by sex and age and use the search bar for finding networking opportunities in your area.

Though Facebook's effectiveness for branding purposes is perhaps decreasing, or at least needs more investment put into it, there's still a lot of 'free' value to be had from the site, so take a look and see what nuggets you can dig up.

## 'Trí mo chor féin' or Blame Game? #26

By Eamonn O'Brien



### Synopsis:

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How accepting or accommodating are you of promises made, not delivered? When stuff goes wrong and you don't get what you paid for, how often is your knee jerk reaction to: consider how you might have been at fault or to be more understanding than you know you should about those who 'failed to do what they said they'd do when and how they said they would? And how do you feel if these guilty parties don't seem especially contrite? And while I absolutely blamed myself for the 'series of unfortunate events' in today's story, should I have?

### 4 Takeaways:

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1. If things go wrong with services you provide, how proactive are you about putting things right and showing your customer that you care?

2. Even if a customer problem when using your services is not of your making, to what extent do you see it as your job to be a source of empathy?

3. What's your stance on when or if you'll apologize where a customer thinks you've fallen short of their expectations?

4. How do you ensure your front line troops - who manage what Jan Carlzon used to 'call moments of truth' - are equipped and minded to go the extra mile to solve problems when they arise?

### About Eamonn O'Brien:

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Photo Credit: [Cyberslayer](#)

What happens if your customers are unfortunate enough to have disappointing experiences with your products or services? Are you set up to take immediate, remedial action or to at least take the sting out of these situations – giving you the chance to redeem yourself in the eyes of your customers and reduce the chances they'll share their negative experiences with offline and online communities? Here's a personal case in point.

For the first time in my life I missed a plane recently when visiting London. And as experiences go, I don't mind telling you, it sucked.

I had foolishly relied on trains turning up when they should and taking the same amount of time to travel from London to Gatwick as normal. And I got it monumentally wrong, on both counts.

Three trains in row - which were supposed to show up every 15 minutes – were no shows and when, at last, a train did arrive... it took an hour and a half for an hour journey!

### Crapsville!

Instead of having almost an hour and 45 minutes to saunter to my plane - maybe even browsing through a plethora of stuff I had no interest in buying in duty free and assorted other shops - I had 17 minutes to leg it from a train station, through security, and get to a Ryanair departure gate on t'other side of Gatwick!

Impossible, you may think.

Of course, I knew the odds of success were appalling. And yet, with an act of defiance that's up there with King Canute ordering a tide to desist, I determined I would try to get that flight!

SEamonn O'Brien is the founder of The Reluctant Speakers Club,

President of the Professional Speaking Association of Ireland, an award winning blogger/podcaster, and the author of *How to Make Powerful Speeches*. He works with senior executives and professional to conquer their fears of speaking in public with confidence. Members learn how to hone their communication skills and speak with an unprecedented degree of clarity, persuasiveness, and authority. Eamonn holds an MBA from Manchester Business School and a BSc (Management) from Trinity College Dublin.

### Contacting Eamonn O'Brien:

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Bags flying everywhere, running at what passes for speed for me these days, and with incessant shouts of "Excuse me, excuse me, excuse me" to any and all sedentary travellers who happened to be in my way...

...I managed to get to and through security in mach speed - despite a surprisingly high level of fumbling and muttering of obscenities when items taken out of pockets and bags proved remarkably difficult to return to whence they came.

And, with beads of sweat and disturbingly heavy breathing, I made it to the Ryanair gate with 7 minutes to go!

Hurrah.

But it wasn't hurrah!

An officious gatekeeper peered at me over her glasses and announced, with a voice and tone not dis-similar to David Walliam's smug Little Britain character who is given to saying: "Computer says no"... "Too late! We've finished boarding!"

"But the plane is still here, right? And the doors hasn't been shut yet, right?" I asked or, maybe, protested.

"Don't matter." She said, "We've finished". And looking at her partner across the way asked, "That's right mate, 'innit'?"

Her 'mate' nodded sheepishly and I knew my goose was cooked. It was clear that further pleading by yours truly was a waste of breath. I was in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Jobsworth.

Now what?

How does a body get out of a departure lounge?

I didn't know; I had never tried this before.

And it turns out that it's more complicated that you might imagine.

I eventually found a security manager who told me that I was now a security risk and needed to be escorted out of the airport. And this job was supposed to be done by the airline I was travelling with.

"Funnily enough, they never mentioned that to me", I explained.

"I'll bet they didn't", he replied.

"This happens all the time" he grumbled and, after a moment of reflection, he begrudgingly agreed to escort me through a process that would take almost 30 minutes.

Once back at the check in desk, post my 'walk of shame', I found a smiling Aer Lingus ticket agent.

She saw my distress and cheerfully (and to my relief) confirmed that I was in luck. She

had one ticket left to Dublin that night and I could have it at a bargain rate of just £165!

Pride dented, wallet lighter, but with a new ticket in hand, I appeared again at security. The same man who had told me barely an hour previous that it was humanly possible to make my planned flight recognised me at once and said:

“Ah, you again. Well at least you look a little less stressed this time.”

I didn't reply, but in my head I was thinking, “Looks can be deceiving”!

So, I got home a wiser, weary, and less well off passenger. And sure, don't these things happen every day in Airports around the world and won't I have learned a lesson from all my travails? And, in any case, shouldn't I have known better?

And the answer are: yes, yes, and yes.

But, that didn't stop me thinking.

If you or I sell services to others and we don't deliver on our promises, when we say we will and in the ways we said we would, is the punter at least partially to blame for not anticipating that we might let them down?

As a customer/consumer, should you really have to regularly make allowances for those who might under-deliver?

For the record, I did blame myself. But should I have?

What's your view? What would you have done in the same situation?

Would you have been among the vast **majority of customers** who:

- Don't lose their heads or complain with great conviction on these occasions, but
- Do tell a gazillion people later about their awful experiences (commonly online via blogs and/or social media feeds, just as I'm doing right now), and
- Try to avoid these service providers in the future?

Or would you have erupted and maybe even morphed into a one person Vigilante?

And, if yes, to what effect?

# The Revolution will not be televised... But you can download the Podcast #27

By Fergus Ryan



## Synopsis:

The internet is like the universe; it is continuing to expand and there is a place for everybody. 30 years ago there was almost a finite amount of media space and the barriers to entry were significant. The internet has created more space for people to use New Digital Media to create their own corner of the internet. But are we capitalising on that? The Podcast medium has yet to be fully utilised particularly by brands and business. The Digital Media Revolution is under way but 'The Revolution will not be televised'... that's too old school.

## 4 Takeaways:

1. The internet has provided enough space for us all to have a presence. Have you got yours?
2. Podcasts are an under used medium that could provide you with a cost effective, global voice.
3. The best things about podcasts are they are audio, on demand, with content to your liking.
4. The Digital Media Revolution has seen a shift in control of content. For example, MMA is the fastest growing sport in the world without the help of traditional media.

## About Fergus Ryan:

Fergus Ryan started his own company, 4th Level Digital Media in 2014. Specialising in Google Adwords, Podcasting and Social Media Strategy, 4th



That was then.

One of the most beautiful things the internet has afforded everybody is space.

30 years ago in the days when TV, Radio, Newspaper and Magazine outlets were the Four Horsemen of Traditional Media, the barriers to entry were significant. There was almost a finite amount of media space – a set number of TV stations, radio stations and printed media. You

couldn't just create content and push it out through one of these media. You would have had to get past an Editor or a Director; in addition to being in direct competition with a horde of other hopefuls.

Sure, new entrants came along every once in a while but the big outlets seemed to get bigger. They began to control the content and push out what they thought would be popular. Ratings, circulation, subscriptions, and other such metrics drove what people consumed through these media. A news story was good if the numbers said so. It didn't matter whether the content accurate, factual or even socially relevant.

## The Digital Media Revolution.

Roll it forward to today and we have a completely different way of interacting with news and information. The internet has created an ongoing 'Digital Media Revolution'. The Revolution is taking place on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, iTunes and a plethora of other digital media outlets and social channels. Whereas the Traditional Media outlets used to control the content we consumed, over the last 10-15 years the market is taking back control of how and what content it consumes and creating its own at the same time.

The barriers to entry have been removed. Now all you need is a decent wifi connection and you can launch your own website, YouTube channel, multiple social media channel and the list is becoming endless. How good your content is will dictate who will receive your outlet is.

## Taking back the Airwaves.

For me, the Podcast is one of the most significant media developments but also one of the most under used in the Digital Media Revolution. Its estimated there approximately 250,000 podcast shows available that have been downloaded over 1 billion times. When you consider the reach and impact a podcast can have, I feel every brand or business, corporate or personal should and could harness a podcast to their advantage.

There are many advantages to podcasting like cost effectiveness, getting a global reach, providing measurable data but the three big selling points for me are 1) its audio 2) its on demand and 3) you retain total creative control.

Level Digital Media can help people and businesses reach their audience on the web. Fergus is also a Freelance Media Specialist and covers the sport of Mixed Martial Arts for Setanta Sports and Independent.ie. With 16 years' experience in the investment management industry Fergus is also a freelance investment consultant.

### About Fergus Ryan:

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You can follow Fergus on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), his [website](#) or by [emailing him](#).

1. The big advantage audio has over say webpages or video is you can consume audio while doing something else. Whether it's a commute, exercising or a menial task in the office you can listen to audio while you're doing the other things. If you're reading or watching something, there's not much else you could be doing.

2. In the old days of radio you had to tune in at a set time to hear a particular show. For a while people recorded radio on to a cassette to listen back but not many people do that anymore. Why? Because the radio shows are also available in podcast form! If the traditional medium of radio is using it, this endorses the new digital media of podcasts. All you need is a smartphone or mp3 player, subscribe to your favourite show and set it to download automatically and you will always have your audio listening pleasure on demand.

3. The podcast medium should and could be utilised more by businesses and brand to reach out to their audience. If you built your organisation, you have content for a podcast. If your organisation has sales people, you have content for a podcast. If your organisation produces products that require training, you have content for a podcast. If your organisation has a product that gets updated, you have content for a podcast. There are podcasts on the periodic table, oil field drilling and the career choices for engineers. Basically, anyone can have a podcast. If you're absolutely convinced you don't have a topic for a podcast, find a topic you're interested in and become the title sponsor. Once you are happy with the content you can push it out.

Digital = Choice

Its not just a media revolution, it's a content revolution also.

A great example of how digital media and a subject matter have had a symbiotic success story is the Ultimate Fighting Championship. Its not specific to podcasts but it just proves if your content is worthy Digital Media will help you reach your audience.

Nine years ago the UFC was barely on TV and not being reported by the sports sections of the mainstream traditional media.

If you were a fan of the sport, as I was, you needed

websites to stay up to date with the events and YouTube to watch old fights.



As the presence of Mixed Martial Arts started to grow on the web the UFC embraced digital media. Soon they were broadcasting the preliminary fights live on YouTube. Fighters are given quarterly social media bonuses for posts that get the most engagement with fans. The UFC's most recent venture was to create their own digital platform – Fight Pass. Now, UFC fans can watch events via Fight Pass whether their country has a TV deal or not.

If the UFC sat back and waited for the Traditional Media outlets to embrace MMA, they might be still waiting. From a point of borderline extinction in 2005 MMA's largest global organisation now produces more than 40 live events annually and is the largest Pay-Per-View event provider in the world, broadcast in over 149 countries and territories, to nearly one billion homes worldwide, in 30 different languages.

### Bottom Line

The internet is like the universe. It is continuing to expand and there is a place for everybody in it. The Digital Media Revolution is well under way and anyone can take part. Everybody should. As Gil Scott Heron said... "The revolution will put you in the driver's seat... The revolution will not be televised, will not be televised... The revolution will be live." Why not put your contribution to the Revolution in a podcast.

## Big can be Better. #28

By Andrew McLindon



### Synopsis:

Instead of aiming for a niche or mass social media audience, the focus should be on developing the right audience for the right strategic reasons. This could be 10 people or 100,000, but it needs to be a sustainable, active, engaging group. They should not be treated as followers, but as customers. They need to be listened to, engaged with, and their expectations met. If they are treated properly, then they won't mind helping when asked to. When this happens, your social media audience can be an incredible asset.

### 4 Takeaways:

1. Strategic rather than tactical approach needed to build a sustainable social media audience.
2. Only chase followers if the right thing to do strategically.
3. Better off with a smaller, more engaged audience than larger disinterested group.
4. Social media can be an incredibly positive force for good. The "right" audience is what is right for you - not necessarily a certain demographic

### About Andrew McLindon:

Andrew McLindon is a former technology and business journalist and editor. Previously a PR consultant and a Communications and Marketing Manager, he is Director of Communications with An Garda Síochána. He has a MA in



### Social Media Users Are Customers Not Followers

It has rightly been said that organisations would be better to focus on the quality rather than volume of their followers on social media.

This is in line with any decent marketing or communications strategy – target the right message at the right audience through the right medium.

Since social media activity can be time consuming for organisations, it is not about being niche for the sake of it, but ensuring your social media activities are efficient and effective.

But it also shouldn't mean ruling out building and maintaining a mass social media audience.

Just as every strategy should be tailored to its organisation, sometimes bigger is best.

In the case of a national body such as An Garda Síochána that can potentially impact on every citizen's life, building a large social media audience is critical as it allows us to distribute time-sensitive information directly to as many people as possible.

Such an example is the impact of social media in Child Rescue Ireland (CRI) alerts. These are nationwide alerts sent out via the media and other partners when An Garda Síochána believe that a child or children are at significant risk. In order to assist with the investigation, we need as many people as possible to view the CRI Alert.

If people ever want proof of the positive power of social media then the reaction to CRI Alerts is a vivid demonstration.

Political Communications and a MSc in Marketing. His views are his own.

### Contacting Andrew McLindon:

You can contact Andrew by [email](#).

A recent CRI alert had a reach of over 380,000 on Facebook with over 6,000 interacting with the post, and was viewed by nearly 60,000 on Twitter. Even when we launched a CRI Alert at 3.11am it was seen by 7,000 people on Facebook within two hours and 200,000 by 10am.

That kind of reach would not have been possible without having a mass audience.

However, it is how this scale is built that is critical. “Buying” followers or likes through competitions will get you numbers, but leaves you at the mercy of fickle fans that may not return.

Instead, there should be a focus on having a sustainable, quality audience. Without that, you may end up broadcasting to a large amount of people who aren’t listening, or don’t care or don’t engage. In other words, you are wasting your time.

And when I say quality, for the purposes of An Garda Síochána this is not in relation to having followers mainly from a particular demographic, but the percentage of our social media audience who engage with us either through comment, re-tweets, likes or shares.

The aim should be to attract an audience that will regularly come back for more because they are being given what they want and feel they are being listened to. (This is the ideal and I’m not claiming that we always meet that ideal in An Garda Síochána.)

In other fields, this is called customer service.

As recent new entrants to mass retailing have demonstrated, quality and quantity don’t necessarily have to be in opposing camps.

There is nothing wrong in chasing numbers as long as it is done correctly and for the right strategic reasons. What is really needed is a focus on building social media loyalty.

This requires a constant focus on the customer and their needs. The question is whether organisations are treating their social audience, regardless of its size, as followers or customers. There is a crucial and critical difference.

# Creating a Masterpiece Post. #29

By Emmet McNally



## Synopsis:

Creating the “perfect post” is an art that has evolved alongside the advancement of social media over the past decade. Like any art there is no exact recipe for success but there are some guidelines that can help you create that masterpiece.

I have outlined the 5 tips that I have refined over the years that have been key to my most successful online content.

## 4 Takeaways:

1. For maximum effect, tailor your content to speak to your fans extended network.
2. Stand out from the crowd by being original.
3. Good use of the headline and imagery makes your content stand on a busy news feed.
4. Keep checking regularly on what others are doing online in your sector and similar sectors – you never know where your next big idea will come from.

## About Emmet McNally:

Emmet McNally has been working, living and breathing social media for almost a decade. He believes that the perfect post is an art that has evolved alongside the advancement of social media. His commitment to this ‘art’ has been recognised nationally and over the years he has learned to per-

I have been working, living and breathing social media for almost a decade. I believe that the perfect post is an art that has evolved alongside the advancement of social media. My commitment to this ‘art’ has been recognised nationally and over the years I have learnt to perfect posts into engaging and memorable content.

Here are my 5 tips for creating that perfect post.

### 1. Know that your audience isn’t your audience!

What makes me an avid worshiper of social media is its blatant disregard for the rules. It has managed to turn the first rule of writing on its head! Peer recommendations carry the most weight. As you draft your post, consider that your audience is not just your fans but the friends of your fans and the friends of the friends of your fans. Think about it - your fans already like you so you don’t have to do much to impress them. Shape your post into something that calls people to add you to their online world. Age and interests are likely to be similar to your fans but consider that their friends may not know anything about you. Be clever with the language that you use so that when your post is shared it still comes across as personal.



### 2. Stand out from the crowd

My mother thought me that I’d never get noticed if I just followed the crowd! Her advice finds its way into point 2 - ask yourself what makes you unique and sell this in your post. If you’re struggling, adapt your tone, play around with your brand, or use an authentic voice. Make people stop what they are doing to notice you. For

inspiration check out Zomato’s social media ad campaign - [“two kinds of people in this world”](#).

### 3. Make your headline ‘just right’

Point 3 is inspired by the story of Goldilocks: give too little info in your headline and your audience will lose interest; too much and they won’t need to click through; ‘just right’ will see your click through rate through the roof. Your headline should have a sense of urgency. More verbs and fewer nouns. It should be entertaining or educational. Attempt to push yourself outside your comfort zone. Use self-referencing language as much as is possible – “I” and “Me” typically works best. You will know the right headline when you see it. If you get stuck then link your headline to something topical in the media.

### 4. Play with imagery

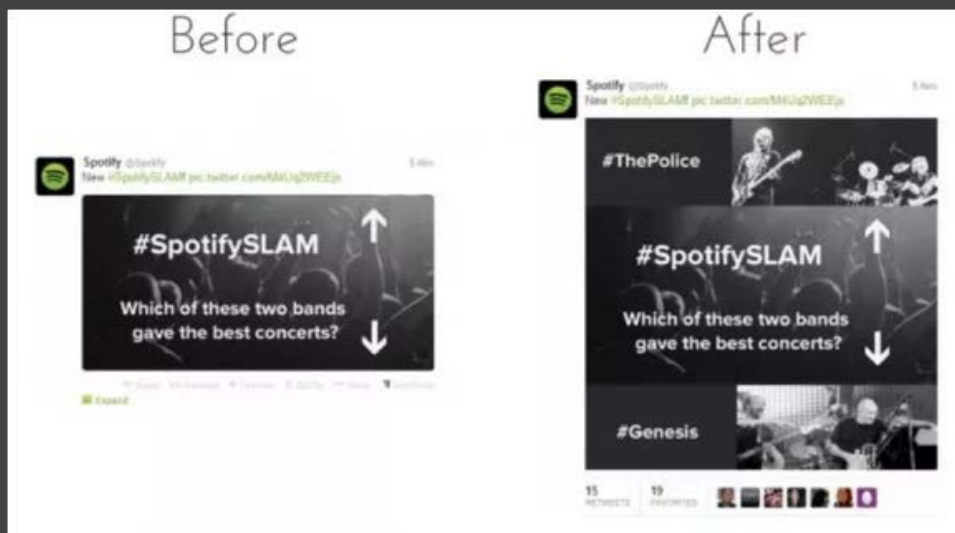
Be creative with your imagery and remember your dimensions. This applies to advertising as much as posts. If you use a standard image in an ad you won’t get a good ROI. The less it looks like an ad the better. Do something different that gets you excited. Spotify nails down this point with this tweet.

fect posts into engaging and memorable content.

Emmet's background includes establishing two online businesses and from there he began working on a consulting basis for a number of different charities. Emmet has since set up a web and social media agency called the Irish Media Agency and plans to develop this agency into an international success by catapulting his clients' online presence to the best in their sector.

### Contacting Emmet McNally:

You can connect with Emmet on [LinkedIn](#), [email](#) him or phone on (01) 443 4433.



Use pictures of real people. People don't care about your logo, or that your CEO shook hands with the President. When you have a conversation with someone, you look them in the eyes. Big and bright eyes draw attention.



### 5. Monitor, copy and share

Make sure you are monitoring what is going on outside of your profile so that you can stay relevant and interesting. When others hit a winner consider if you can identify why it worked for them and take the learning's to your profile.

Alternatively you could share their content. Sharing relevant and diverse content helps to put you across as open-minded and as an aggregator of multiple points of view. This helps to gain trust and respect.

# The Milk and The Fridge Don't Talk #30

By Noreen Henry



## Synopsis:

There is a smart fridge that promises "a quick check of the LCD screen tells you what's inside, food that's about to expire ... and all of this info and more can be accessed on your smartphone app." (LG, 2014) While this sounds great, the reality is that you have to tell the fridge the details of what you put in and what you take out. Therefore, instead of it telling you, it is simply displaying the information you have already given it. Then what about the situation where you or someone else forgets to tell the fridge that they used all of the milk

## 4 Takeaways:

1. The "Internet of Things" is a vision of the future and has been for more than a decade.
2. Do we want a new kind of global physical, digital and virtual infrastructure of devices and entities, which will manage everything for us and also through us, to the very texture and nature of our daily life?
3. It is difficult to get away from the weak link – people.
4. Don't forget the milk on the way home.

## About Noreen Henry:

Noreen Henry is a lecturer in IT at the Mayo campus of GMIT. She lectures in IT support, training, project management & service management on the IT Support and Computer Services

We have all heard of the smart fridge; an 'intelligent fridge' that will text us as and when we need milk. But for all its intelligence, there is a glaring weak link – people.

The Internet of Things (IoT) is defined by CISCO as "the network of physical objects accessed through the Internet ... These objects contain embedded technology to interact with internal states or the external environment." (CISCO, 2014)

IoT is proposing a world where not only everyone but everything is connected and can communicate with each other seamlessly. In the home of the future, the fridge will sense when the milk supply is running low and send the appropriate text to ensure a resupply, thereby eliminating the weakest link – us.

In March 2002 Forbes published an article by Chana R. Schoenberger entitled "Internet of Things". This article predicted that in "in ten years nearly every consumer item will probably bear a tiny chip that continually broadcasts its existence to radio-frequency readers ... just about everywhere." (Schoenberger, 2002)

Schoenberger (2002) contended that the ubiquitous use of radio-frequency identification (RFID) chips will bring god-like knowledge to manufacturers, retailers & competitors, as they will be able to track and monitor consumers through the RFID tags embedded in the clothing. The author depicted the following scenario; After a Prada customer has selected a number of items in a Soho boutique, she is presented with both a video of a model wearing her clothing selection and suggestions for appropriate accessories.

However, twelve years later, these predictions have not become common place and are certainly not ubiquitous. TAs of today, there are no chips or readers embedded in either the milk carton or my fridge. I have also never shopped for Prada in Soho, so maybe!

In the same article by Schoenberger (2002) Ashton (a Procter & Gamble executive heading up a \$9 million MIT research project) contended that "we need an internet for things, a standardized way for computers to understand the real world." In 2004 Scientific American presented an article entitled "The Internet of Things" by Neil Gershenfeld, Raffi Krikorian and Danny Cohen. This article presents "Internet-0",



Management course and chair the new B. Sc. (Hons.) in Digital Media & Society. She has a particular interest in developments in IT and education.

#### Contacting Noreen Henry:

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You can follow Noreen on [Twitter](#) or contact her by [email](#).

the predicted future of the smart home, a technical solution that “allows a myriad of devices to intercommunicate and interoperate: pill bottles can order refills from the pharmacy; light switches and thermostats can talk to lightbulbs and heaters... Internet-0 provides a single consistent standard.” (Gershenfeld, et al., 2004)

Ashton (2009) argued that “Today computers—and, therefore, the Internet—are almost wholly dependent on human beings for information. Nearly all ... data available on the Internet were first captured and created by human beings—by typing, pressing a record button, taking a digital picture or scanning a bar code. Conventional diagrams of the Internet include servers and routers and so on, but they leave out the most numerous and important routers of all: people. The problem is, people have limited time, attention and accuracy—all of which means they are not very good at capturing data about things in the real world.”

Ashton (2009) also asserts that “...Our economy, society and survival aren’t based on ideas or information—they’re based on things.... We need to empower computers with their own means of gathering information, so they can see, hear and smell the world for themselves”.

So, my point is - if the predictions from a decade and more ago and Ashton’s views on empowering computers were accurate, I – the weak link - should not have to tell the fridge either what I put into it and/or take out of it; the fridge will not even have to sense that the milk is nearly gone; the milk carton will be able to do it and reorder itself by itself!

However grandiose these predictions, we have not yet achieved them on a commercially available level. The Internet of Things Council states,

“The Internet of Things (IoT) is a vision. It is being built today. ... It is arriving with startling promises of pervasive and endless connectivity and automation. It envisions a new kind of global physical, digital and virtual infrastructure of devices and entities, which will manage everything for us and also through us, from energy grids and traffic, to medical and financial decision-making processes, to the very texture and nature of our daily life.” (The Internet of Things Council, n/d)

So, it looks like I will have to keep buying the milk on the way home until technology catches up!

P.S. The smart fridge mentioned in the synopsis is no longer on the market.

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Available at:



# Traditional Marketing as We Know it is Alive and Kicking #31

By David Glynn



## Synopsis:

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We are bombarded everywhere we go by Marketing Messages and are excellent at discarding what we don't want.

It is said Marketing can be about putting the information in front of the right audience at the right time.

Remember the customer journey and the potential lifetime value of a customer and his or her potential word of mouth or referral.

Make sure you have your customers happy and always leaving happy.

The problems if any occur on the premises so have employees vigilant and able to solve all problems as they happen not on Trip advisor.

If you are passionate about your business make sure your employees are too.

Decide on your Marketing plan but have it adapt to change or topical happenings.

## 4 Takeaways:

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1. It can be time consuming but there are opportunities all around you for your business.

2. It's a matter of spotting them and making sure you have a goal for your activity.

3. Don't ignore online either.

4. Never stop marketing as we are in a 24-7 environment and the customer

It is bizarre to be writing this in the midst of the web summit one of the biggest events ever to be brought to this country and credit is due to Paddy Cosgrave and his team.

However I will not be swayed and keep to my original thoughts for this blog post:

How many times in the last few years have you heard the following "Traditional Marketing is gone" or the other "it's all online now"

Don't get me wrong I am a firm believer in all things online but yet ignore the traditional at your peril.

We are bombarded by Marketing messages everywhere you go and then we are told the customer is king, it is they who are in control and they will decide how and when to contact you and your business.

That's no problem - we have the mechanisms in place so that they can tweet us or write on our wall.

Now let me ask you a question?

What was the last purchase you made and why?

For me it was Sunday afternoon and I was ravenous for a bite to eat after a few hours shopping.

Where did I go and why?

I went to A.. Because .....

Well you see I had been there before and thought the food was excellent, reasonably priced and a nice ambiance oh and I know a few of the staff by so if they were on duty I would be addressed by name and exchange a few pleasantries.

So how many factors was that and did the online enter the equation once.

Two other purchases of small value were also made and to me are worth their weight in Marketing Gold.

First it was a pleasant summer's day and I was overcome by a need to have a cold drink.

As the beer garden was not an option it had to be non-alcoholic so what did I choose?

You are right the soft drink that's everywhere from stands in supermarkets to giant billboards and even covering Luas Carriages.

The other was a product in the form of shower gel.

Last week I stayed with friends and it happened to be in their bathroom, well there you

never stops looking or thinking about purchases.

### About David Glynn:

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David Glynn is the Marketing Manager with the 4\* [McWilliam Park Hotel](#) in Claremorris, Co. Mayo.

### Contacting David Glynn:

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You can follow David on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) or the [McWilliam Park Hotel website](#).

go a lifetime affinity to another brand gone just like that.

Again what's important to me was both purchases were made off line and no online activity needed.

Let's move up the purchasing scale:

I bought an Pad mini. My brother has one, I have seen him use it, and it looks good and suits me as I am too lazy to do the research so no image ad extensions needed for this consumer.

At the moment I am not in the market for a car but should this change I will be confident that I have my decisions made again purely by what I see my friends driving, what I have enjoyed the look of as a passenger and experienced a cheeky test drive.

Neither am I looking for a holiday at the moment unfortunately but at the moment when this changes I can only think about a particular area of Greece again influenced by my cousin's excellent recommendation.

Online is a big space and can be very crowded difficult to get the exact information that you need in a hurry.

So Google AdWords we have tried many permutations and combinations and an interesting anecdote was September 2013 when we stopped for a month we had our best month of online bookings ever. Imagine that??

Display ads are expensive and deemed "[a crock of shit](#)" by some commentators and let's face it the click through rate has always been very low with more going on impressions.

Sure we see ads every day but they don't carry any guarantee we will purchase.

And with remarketing adverts again the jury can be out on these are they annoying or effective.

And don't forget Irish consumers are pretty savvy online so well able to install ad blockers.

Now here is another option: Direct mail as it is called among other names

Look at this amount in my mail box last week:

I believe with the advances in Admailer this has huge possibilities:

Imagine a local gardener or restaurant and now you can target exactly the customers you want in a specific area and we know people will open or look at a piece of mail addressed to them as opposed to a random mass produced leaflet.



All you need is a really strong Call to action such as Free bottle of wine with 2 Set Meals.

There are endless possibilities even do different area for different weeks and measure the results.

When it comes to Branding whatever your business is there are countless opportunities to put your business name ahead of your competitors.

Here are a few of my favourite:

- What is the local sports team, could you sponsor their jersey
- Maybe you could sponsor post match refreshments
- If you are a coach company offer transport for the team to one of their matches or if you are a gym offer them use of the gym and pool.
- This will be repaid in spades with local good will and look at the PR you can get when they win the respective league or tournament.
- Is your business near a park, why not sponsor some flowers, plants (idea if you are a gardener)
- Is there a fashion show locally that if you are a hairdresser you do the hair & make up for the models or supply some clothes if you are a boutique or man's shop.
- Do a product sampling evening with some refreshments in your premises and you'll have phone numbers, email database to send special offers in no time which when treated right can be lifetime customers.
- This may work for butchers, bakers, off licenses so many possibilities.
- Where is the busy junction in your town, a cleverly made sign can cost as little as €50 and will generate massive attention if done properly.
- I pass a giant paintbrush and a tin of paint every day so when I do the house in a new coat of paint next spring I know where to go.
- The tin of paint is 8ft tall so catches the eye.
- Now is the time to introduce yourself to the local radio and newspaper.
- They need some news stories so position yourself as the expert thought leader in your field. Let them know you are available for interview or comment on seasonal trends and business in general.
- I am almost 6 years doing tradeshow and while they can be expensive & a big undertaking when the audience is correct they offer a golden opportunity to meet thousands of customers over a 3 day period.
- Databases are easily created from these lists and you can identify the genuine from the free biro hunters.
- You can't beat the face to face interaction and explaining the product in details that can't be properly done online.
- I have seen our brand grow from nothing to been recognisable in the last few years and I have to say hand on heart attribute a portion of this success to some exhibitions as the Ploughing and Holiday World.



It can also offer photo opportunities with some famous people such as Mr Pat Kenny (photo attached or get yourself on the cover of the Rte. Guide

Each year when we analyse our web traffic 80% of it is organic that means 100,000 people or so have seen our Marketing somewhere and want to find more information.



Can you ignore that amount of people more than a full Croke Park!

Now one thing never assume you don't have to market or everybody sees your work or activity.

One firm I thought was huge this Summer at Marketing was HB Ice-cream, they were simply everywhere and one

day I asked a Marketing Colleague who is always on the lookout for creative brands so do you like the HB campaign ?

His reply "sorry what was that I didn't see it!!!!

Now if you do go on to Facebook and have a clever content strategy well done you but I want to put out that my most successful posts in the last few months were spur of the moment to coincide with topical issues such as the Budget, water charges and the World Cup.

Ok so a little design time but take a look at the reach some up on 50,000 people.

**McWilliam Park Hotel**  
Yesterday at 9:20am · Edited · 0

Like & share this to be entered in a competition for a Complimentary One Night's Bed & Breakfast for two people. Get sharing

**Spend as long as you like in the shower**

2 Nights Bed & Breakfast & 1 Dinner + 3rd Night Free  
**€99pps**

Charges don't apply when you stay at the 4 star McWilliam Park Hotel

Other special packages & subject to availability  
Clonsilla, Co Mayo  
Tel: 014 937 0600  
www.mcwilliampark.ie

52,608 People Reached

3,157 Likes, Comments & Shares

1,531 Likes	776 On Post	755 On Shares
452 Comments	397 On Post	55 On Shares
1,174 Shares	1,159 On Post	15 On Shares

875 Post Clicks

875 Photo Views	0 Link Clicks	0 Other Clicks
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**NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**

33 Hide Post	5 Hide All Posts
0 Report as Spam	0 Unlink Page

52,608 people reached

Boost Post

Maybe don't stress so much on planning your content if you are creative and think on your feet the ideas will come.

Now I hope I haven't bored you to tears and I don't claim to be any expert by any means so let's bring on the debate ...

Best wishes to all for Congregation 14

Best quote "anything can be sold once with marketing but it takes a quality product to achieve repeat business"

## Scientists are Tweople Too #32

By Marie Boran



### Synopsis:

Researchers use social media as much as the next person, but are they leveraging it for the lab? These are the results of a nationwide survey of the social media habits of Irish scientists.

### 4 Takeaways:

1. Researchers use mainstream social media like the rest of us schlubs. They look for jobs on LinkedIn and post cat pics on Facebook. A relatively small contingent of researchers use Twitter but do so in a very specific way - it's an information network for sciencey stuff.
2. Most researchers are frequent social media browsers but very infrequent content creators.
3. Research institutes, by and large, don't support their scientists' social media activity. This may be a deterrent to adoption.
4. Researchers on social media like nothing better than to connect with fellow experts and explain their research to members of the public. Lets make platforms/practise that encourage this!

### About Marie Boran:

Marie Boran is a PhD researcher and lecturer in Dublin City University. She is also a freelance journalist in any spare time she has. She also has a weekly column in the Irish Times.

### Contacting Marie Boran:

You can follow Marie on [Twitter](#).



The hyperlink. That's where it all began. When TimBL (or Sir Tim Berners-Lee is you want to get all formal about it) created the Worldwide Web, the hyperlink was to serve as a way of navigating effortlessly from one scientific document to another. Berners-Lee himself started his career as a physicist working at particle physics research facility CERN, where the web was born.

Science = Web

Science, therefore, was the driving force behind this wonderful web we all have access to. It was created to make life easier for researchers and I believe the social web can work for science just as effectively.

We often talk about Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and other social platforms in terms of financial performance, celebrity culture, marketing opportunities, trolling behavior, narcissistic attention seekers or privacy concerns.

Today lets talk about social media in terms of the passionate, curious and hardworking individuals known as research scientists. You should care if and how they use social media because we, the public, fund much of the research that is carried out in Ireland through Science Foundation Ireland, The Health Research Board and other organisations.

Social media has the potential to help scientists collaborate globally, it gives them a platform to engage with the public and an opportunity to make scientific research more transparent. It can offer a place to problem solve with fellow experts, publicise their hard-earned research results or simply search for and share scientific documents as TimBL had intended all along.

The question is: are Irish scientists using social media? How do they use it? Are

there any deterrents to using it? Perhaps the fear that frequent tweeting may draw criticism from colleagues who think they must have nothing better to do. As part of my masters at the Insight Centre for Data Analytics I surveyed as many scientists as possible researching at third level institutes around Ireland and the results were pretty interesting.

The survey was sent to 1,504 people within the nine main SFI research clusters and a further 109 in five smaller research clusters. There were a total of 315 respondents (with 288 answering to completion). Over half of these were PhD researchers or post docs and the gender balance was skewed towards male; only 35% were female.

Tweet a little, lurk a lot

So, on with the results: Social media browsing is popular amongst Irish researchers: 71.18% log into or browse on social media platforms at least once a day. In terms of creating or sharing content (writing blog posts, 'retweeting' links etc.) the behaviour is noticeably different; only 15.97% post to these platforms at least once a day. Nearly as many (13.54%) never create or share content.

YouTube: the surprise contender

It might surprise you to learn that the most popular platform amongst researchers is LinkedIn: 83.3% of respondents use it. YouTube came next

(78%), with Facebook coming in third place (75.69%). We can safely assume that LinkedIn is used for job opportunities and networking purposes but what's interesting about YouTube is that 40% of those surveyed said they used it for a mix of professional and personal reasons. The survey didn't drill down deeper so we have no way of knowing what these reasons were but we know it's not going to be job seeking like LinkedIn; it must directly relate to their research. Who knows, this might be an opportunity worth exploring: developing a YouTube channel aimed at researchers?

Facebook is less fertile ground. It might be popular but this is strictly for downtime with 84% using it for personal reasons only. And although everyone seems to be on Twitter these days, only 35% of these researchers said they used it. Those who use it, however, don't treat it like Facebook: 49% use it strictly for professional purposes while a further 16% use it for a mix of professional and personal. I myself fall into that category: I follow comedians and tweet friends while searching for academic papers and 'favouriting' tweets from Nature. Twitter is handy like that!

What's SlideShare?

In this survey I also included researcher-specific social networking services. You might have heard of ResearchGate or Mendeley. Certainly, you'll have heard of or used SlideShare. When I ranked all of these platforms by professional use the most popular is still LinkedIn but ResearchGate came second, YouTube third and Twitter popped up in fourth place (Google+ and Facebook were waaay down there). Don't worry if you haven't heard of those specialist platforms because it turns out that on average (across 5 specific ones) 42% of all respondents had never heard of them either.

I know I'm throwing a lot of numbers at you but hang in there. I have a few more and they're good 'uns. For example, the most important use for social media, as ranked by these Irish researchers, was networking as chosen by 54%. Public engagement was

the second highest ranked, followed by “keeping up-to-date with research news”. I’d wondered if scientists were interested in sharing their research findings across social media and I got my answer: 63% ranked social media as of little or no importance for that particular task.

Relatedly content sharing seems mostly to be research or science-related news, website links and images (I hope they weren’t all LOLcats). We can see this as confirmation that certain social media services won’t work for scientists or that the existing ones aren’t suitable. Either way we have a better idea of what works and what doesn’t.

What I do know is that scientists won’t use social media as part of their research workflow if it is not supported. Two thirds of respondents didn’t even know if their institute had a social media policy while a further 22% said one was not in place. Again, two thirds didn’t know if social media activity was rewarded in any way. My opinion is that it should be: if a scientist is blogging about research in a way that improves public understanding or if their videos or tweets are elevating the institute’s public profile then this should be rewarded in some way. I’m not saying it is in any way similar to publishing a paper on groundbreaking research but it’s a contribution nonetheless.

As Prof. Brian Cox would say, science is amazing. So lets make science on the web more social.

# Knowing your Content Strategy from your Content Strategy #33

By Elaine Larkin



## Synopsis:

Content is everywhere – and there is more and more being added to the digital landfill every day. The increased interest in “content” has resulted in the use of the term content strategy to mean content calendars for editorial content planning (brand journalism/ content marketing) and social media content plans. “Content Strategy”, in my book, is something different. Here I explain how the discipline of “Content Strategy” is distinct from a content strategy for content marketing or social media.

## 4 Takeaways:

1. A dictionary definition of strategy is a careful plan or method for achieving a particular goal usually over a long period of time.
2. The discipline of “Content Strategy” is not the same as a social media or content marketing content strategy.
3. The discipline of “Content Strategy” focuses on the planning, creation, delivery, and governance of content.
4. The discipline of “Content Strategy” is about ensuring your content meets customer needs and business objectives.

## About Elaine Larkin:

Elaine Larkin is a journalist by trade who started her career writing for national newspapers and currently runs a copywriting business called Web Content Partners. After a stint as an in-house journalist for a financial



As the web has mushroomed with more and more pages of descriptive content on websites as time goes on, the discipline of “Content Strategy” has evolved. It is a way to untangle the web of content that exists online and offline in organisations.

I first became aware of the emerging discipline of “Content Strategy” in 2011 having read Erin Kissane’s book *The Elements of Content Strategy*.

Without realising it I was already doing some content strategy in my work as a copywriter. On reading Kissane’s book I knew I wanted to be a content strategist when I grew up.

Fast forward three years and I’ve started seeing the term content strategy pop up more online. Frequently when I click on a link people are talking about content strategy in a way I hadn’t expected.

To many, content strategy is a loose term to describe:

an editorial content calendar planning for blogs/articles  
social media post planning  
That’s not the content strategy I know.

However, it’s completely understandable that people have linked terms like content marketing, digital strategy and social media strategy, and have used the combination of the words content and strategy to describe planning content marketing and social media content.

“Content Strategy”, in my book, is something different. There’s an industry built up around it with international conferences run annually by Confab and CS Forum. I have

institution in 2008 and a return from Dublin to New Ross, Co Wexford she decided to apply her journalistic skills to developing written content for the web. Elaine and her team of journalists produce journalistic-style content for corporate clients to share on social media.

She has been using Twitter since 2009, Facebook since 2007, LinkedIn since 2006, Flickr since 2005 and the internet since 1995.

### Contacting Elaine Larkin:

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You can follow Elaine on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

attended two dedicated content strategy conferences: CS Forum 2011 in London and Confab Europe 2014 in Barcelona.

To explain what I understand as “Content Strategy”, I’m going to quote the US Government, which in turn quotes Kristina Halvorson.

“Content strategy focuses on the planning, creation, delivery, and governance of content. Content not only includes the words on the page but also the images and multimedia that are used. Ensuring that you have useful and usable content, that is well structured, and easily found is vital to improving the user experience of a website.”

We’ll take The New York Times as an example of different types of content strategy because it has:

1. a corporate website which tells you all about the organisation ([NYTco.com](#))
2. a website it publishes newsy/timely content on ([nytimes.com](#))
3. a range of social media accounts

If you – yes you – in your role are focused on content marketing (the newsy content) and social media (what it posts and shares on social media) saw that The New York Times was embarking on a content strategy project you may assume it’s referring to its editorial content calendar, or its social media calendar. It would likely not. Mainly because journalism has its own language and content strategy isn’t what you’d use to describe how you plan out your news publishing schedule.

A content strategy for a corporate is about the content that sits on that corporate site (or in brochures etc) separate to its editorial/content marketing or social media content.

Doing a “Content Strategy” content strategy involves a lot of work in Excel, workshops with stakeholders and making a plan for that content.

As the web is filled more and more with content “Content Strategy” is an area businesses need to turn to, in order to ensure that the content on their website meets customer needs and business objectives.

If you have your social media content strategy and content marketing content strategy in place, that’s all great. But what shape is the material on your website or elsewhere that your bringing your target audience to? This is where your “Content Strategy” content strategy comes into place. Maybe you’re doing it in-house without realising so (content governance).

# How Being Yourself and Empowering Employees can Reap Dividends on Social Media #34

By Brian Gallagher



## Synopsis:

Organizations often struggle to appear genuine and interesting on social media. Self-indulgent content which pushes a sales message is often to blame for poor engagement. Unanswered queries or unhandled complaints after often due to a lack of resources to adequately manage the social space. Here I explain how curation of content, finding your own voice and empowering your entire workforce to act as a social media team can transform your social media presence.

## 4 Takeaways:

1. Being the topic of conversation is not the same as being part of the conversation.
2. People talk to each other not at each other. Brands are people too.
3. Give your employees the freedom to be your advocates and leverage their networks to amplify your message.
4. Dispense with excessive employee social media guidelines and trust people's common sense.

## About Brian Gallagher:

Brian Gallagher is the International Social Media Manager for Ancestry.com. Responsible for social strategy, content generation, community management, blogger outreach, e-care teams and measurement of campaign performance across several regions



## Being part of the conversation

When organizations think about social media they almost always look outwards with the view of bringing people in to engage with them. How can we create compelling and engaging content? How do we attract likes, shares, follows, favourites, retweets, repins and comments to our posts? How can we be part of the conversation?

It is important to remember that being part of the conversation is not the same thing as being the topic of conversation!

Many brands and organizations miss a trick when it comes to being part of the conversation. You cannot simply push out a 'buy our product' post masquerading as content and expect people to engage with you. If you stop for a moment and consider the people you choose to engage with or follow on social media yourself; I'm guessing you will discover that they are people who curate and share content from a variety of sources. They are people who are genuine, entertaining, interesting and knowledgeable about things that you are interested to hear about.

Now imagine if your organization approached social media in the same way as those interesting people. Why not allow your organization to be that interesting person? We are told to be relevant and authentic - many organizations fail miserably at being either!

## Strive to be a thought leader

You should not be afraid to share an insight, article, comment or nugget of information from sources other than your own marketing or content team. Curation of quality content from other sources makes you appear as a credible source for all information relating to your industry. Behave like the leader in an industry and you will be viewed as such.

That's all fine being interesting, you might say, but how do we get people to share or engage with our interesting content?

## Empower your employees

In the beginning I said that most brands look outwards. Many, though not all, fail to utilize their own employees as advocates of their message. It's time to look inwards!

If you empower your employees to share your content to their own social networks you can achieve instant amplification of your message. If you create and curate content which makes your employees feel proud to be identified as part of your organization

including the United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden and Germany.

### Contacting Brian Gallagher:

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You can connect with Brian on [LinkedIn](#) or follow him on [Twitter](#).

you add credibility to your message when they share it.

It's time to burn the SOP manual!

Many organizations are obsessed with social media protocol, creating social media manuals and delivering lengthy presentations to employees so that they know what they can and cannot say. In general all this will achieve is to create a culture of fear within which employees are more inclined to disassociate themselves publicly with your organization. The only rule should be to use common sense. The only question should be 'Does this make sense?' Employees who are empowered to use their common sense can often be the best listening tool you could ever hope for. Create a simple referral system internally – refer sales to sales, legal concerns to legal etc. Employees should not be afraid to have conversations nor should they be afraid to say 'I don't know but I'll pass on your question to someone who does'. It's not rocket science! Despite the old adage – common sense is actually more common than you might think.

### Empowerment equals amplification

If you create content that engages your employees you will increase the reach of your content exponentially. If potential customers or existing customers see your employees sharing that content and speaking positively about your organization, they will be more inclined to reach out to them with questions. If your employees are empowered to answer those questions on social media you will suddenly discover that you have created an always on customer service community to answer questions, add value and potentially convert conversations into sales.

That is the essence of being relevant and authentic; that is what it means to be 'part of the conversation'.

# How and Why Irish Presidential Candidates Avoided Conversation on Twitter in the 2011 Presidential Election #35

By Eoin Mulvihill



## Synopsis:

The topic of this post is how Irish Presidential candidates in the 2011 Irish Presidential Campaign used Twitter as a campaign tool. The author segregated and categorised the tweets of the candidates for a 31 day period and determined how many tweets were part of conversations with the public and how many were simply broadcasting messages in a one-way, top-down fashion. The author provides his analysis of the data in the context of previous research in the area of politicians' use of online tools and offers opinion and analysis on how he feels the tools could be used more effectively in future elections to serve both society and the candidates.

## 4 Takeaways:

1. Conversation is a healthy part of elections and opportunities exist for it to be facilitated through social media.
2. Candidates in the 2011 election either ignored Twitter's ability to facilitate conversation, weren't aware of it, were indifferent to it or disregarded it as part of their strategy.
3. Candidates have historically been shy of exploring issues on the internet and this appeared to correlate with a startlingly low amount of tweets expressed the views of the candidates.
4. The author is of the opinion that a candidate who chooses to use social media to its full dialogic potential could use it to successfully gain traction, leverage their status and also provide leadership through igniting



Presidential Inauguration Ceremony at Dublin Castle 11-11-11 Pic Shows from President Michael D. Higgins, as the army march by after the Presidential Inauguration ceremony at Dublin Castle today (Friday) PIC: MAXWELLS NO REPRO FEE

Elections are a time for conversation about what's important to us. It's during times of election that regions, nations and unions tease out burning issues and public opinion is formed. Given the importance of the public conversation that surrounds elections and the prominence of tools like social media in today's society, I was curious to know how effectively Irish Presidential candidates were using social media to engage the public in conversation. How involved are they in civic conversations online? Do they actively debate and interact on Twitter or do they simply use the tools as self promotional tools? Do they take advantage of how social media facilitates two-way conversation to bring them closer to the public? Or do they simply use social media as a top-down one-way media broadcasting channel to push campaign messages in the same way that they have used posters, TV and fliers for years before?

It was a few years ago when this topic caught my interest and the 2011 Irish Presidential Campaign was in full swing. I decided to undertake a study focusing on the candidates' use of Twitter and create a coding system which categorised the tweets of the presidential candidates to discover a comprehensive and scientific answer for all of these questions. Categories such as 'replies', 'one-way communication', 'dialogic', 'questions' and many more enabled me to segregate every tweet from the candidates' accounts and identify them as either being conversational or broadcast in nature. The categories also allowed me to identify how many tweets touched on 'political issues' and how many were simply 'self promotional'. Over the course of thirty one days and with the help of copious amounts of coffee, I entered every tweet that was sent from all six presidential candidates into my coding system and result was one large batch of data that produced some interesting results.

The Road to the Aras: A One Way Tweet

conversation.

### About Eoin Mulvihill:

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Eoin Mulvihill is Director of Lime Interactive Ltd., a traditional and digital public relations and marketing agency based in Dublin. He has held marketing senior management roles in the motor industry. He loves market analysis, solving problems and coming up with creative marketing solutions for clients. He holds a 1.1 BA (Hons) Media Production Management DCU and Diploma in Digital Marketing (Digital Marketing Institute).

### Contacting Eoin Mulvihill

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You can follow Eoin on his [website](#), [Twitter](#) or by [email](#).

My findings were that the 2011 Irish Presidential election saw candidates use Twitter primarily as a traditional one-way broadcasting medium, akin to TV, radio and print.

I was surprised to see that this use of Twitter as a one-way broadcasting medium was uniform across all candidates. The social media renegade candidate that I had anticipated to discover simply didn't exist.

My study recorded many instances of direct tweets to followers, however the majority of these messages were simply 'thanks for following' messages that rarely invited the recipient to respond and even fewer dared to broach political issues. Large amounts of tweets from the public to the Presidential accounts went unanswered.

If candidates weren't using Twitter to converse with the public, what did they use it for? The vast majority of tweets fell into the 'self promotional' category, updating their followers as to the geographical location of their campaign trail and any upcoming media appearances.

### Missing a Trick

I couldn't help but walk away from this study with a sense that the candidates were missing a trick through their use of Twitter. The things that distinguish social media from traditional platforms - the potential for dialogue, the breaking down of geographical boundaries to facilitate real-time conversation - were being ignored and their twitter feeds represented little more than a real time calendar. What's more, their twitter feeds were even less informative than their traditional brochures as they steered clear of expressing views on any topical issues.

### Tweeting on Egg Shells

Perhaps the single most relevant part of this study was the fact that less than 2% of the presidential candidates' tweets expressed or even indicated their views on key issues important to the voting public. As a researcher who had digested 322 tweets from the candidates, I was no more knowledgeable about the candidates views on key issues than when I had started the research. While some of these subjects were addressed in other forms of media, they failed to penetrate the candidates' Twitter streams.

It is interesting to note that during the few days when media controversies surrounding one of the candidates were at an all time peak, the Twitter feeds of the five candidates were at an all time low - perhaps exposing the caution accompanied them with every tweet they sent.

The relevance of all of this becomes apparent in light of prior research which has found that exposure to political debate can help to increase political awareness, which can in turn lead to people being more politically active and having a greater interest in playing a role in shaping the society in which they live. Exposure to political discourse has been found to improve the likelihood of voting. Elections have been noted as playing an important function in democratic societies because they ignite debate and it is through the process of conversation that people tease out each other's opinions and begin to learn not only how their fellow citizens feel about certain subjects, but how they feel about certain subjects themselves. Thus, it is through dialogue that 'public opinion' is formed and the blueprint for society evolves. Yet instead of making attempts to foster meaningful conversation about burning issues, the majority of the tweets by the presidential candidates concerned their next pit stop with the most

popular type of tweet being thank you messages saying little more than 'thanks for the follow, see you again on the campaign trail.'

Given their captive audience, presidential candidates are in a position to steer the direction of conversation and ignite debate online about issues that are important to society. Such use was not observed during the course of this study.

#### Why The Avoidance of Meaningful Conversation?

Upon observing the lack of conversation between the candidates and the followers, I began to ask another set of questions: Why are candidates so slow to express their views on hot topics? And why do they shy away from conversing online?

In a rare and telling piece of research by Stromer-Galley (2000), the campaign managers of Bill Clinton and Bob Dole, revealed that they 'erred on the side of caution' when it came to entering into dialog with the public online because they didn't want to 'lose control of their campaigns'. They stated that they didn't want to express their opinions on issues that could divide the public and that they believed in order to win the election they must appeal to a majority of people by speaking on a couple of salient issues. It was deemed easier to appeal to a larger group of people when candidates views expressed were not divisive.

This attitude is troubling from a public discourse use point of view. A candidate who adopts this strategy must sacrifice meaningful conversation in order to appeal to a wide catchment. During the course of this study, five out of five candidates ran ambiguous campaigns that touched on broad ideas of making the country a better place, but failed to get down to the possibly polarising nitty gritty topics of interest.

#### What Can We Learn For the Next Election?

One thing is for sure, when the next presidential race comes along, Ireland will be a very different place from what it was in 2011, and social networks will have a larger presence than they have today. If future presidential candidates want to be recognised as being truly present on networks such as Twitter, then they must be prepared to engage with people the way people are engaging with one another – openly and through back and forth dialog. If they want to serve society, then they should talk, listen and talk again to the people, where the people are, in full view of the people. We only need to take a glance to social media revolutions in Libya to see that the people have awoken to the power of fostering meaningful dialog through social media. Isn't it time that presidential candidates did too?

It would be nice to see in the next election, a candidate who uses the tools of social media to their full potential - a social media renegade who dares to have a conversation with his or her followers. A candidate who chooses conversation over ambiguity. A candidate who chooses to express their meaningful sentiments and to interact. To question and to respond. It would not only help them steer civic conversation and lead positive and healthy dialogue that could contribute to the progression of public opinion - it could help bring them closer to the voting public. Perhaps sacrificing ambiguity for conversation is a risk - but it could be a risk that helps them win the election.

# Connected to discontentment through the connectivity paradox #36

By Alan Tyrrell



## Synopsis:

In our hyperconnected world are we multi-tasking or multi-failing?

## 4 Takeaways:

1. Is your story relevant to your audience?
2. Is your story one that can be spread quickly in any channel?
3. How often do you replay the message back to your employees?
4. Quality takes time, practice and investment.

## About Alan Tyrrell:

Alan Tyrrell is director of PSG Plus the corporate communications and reputation management agency of PSG Communications, Ireland's leading communications group.

## Contacting Alan Tyrrell:

Alan can be contacted by [email](#).



This post started out as snapshot on internal communications with some tips and advice on best practice. It still has that brief take away but, based on a light bulb moment at about 3.17am the other morning, I want to wrap that advice up in the context of what I now call the 'Connectivity Paradox'.

The paradox is a simple one. Being 'always on' means we are also never fully present in the right now activity we are supposed to be doing. I don't want to sound like the Grinch who stole the modem but having observed colleagues, friends, clients and others in meetings and 'social' engagements this past while I've been struck that almost everyone is almost always doing more than one thing.

We say we are multi-tasking but are we really multi-failing?

It's just like those clever road safety adverts on radio which confirm for us in practical terms what the scientific evidence already states. You can't actually fully concentrate on two things at the same time.

Yes, we may be in the meeting, but we are also peaking at the phone and checking emails. We may be driving but at the lights (or even while cruising) we are still texting, emailing and phoning. We may be watching a sports game on one screen but we're also enjoying it through the vitriol screaming from another screen.

And all the while, we are really always just a little bit discontented with our content.

This issue has been bubbling under in the workplace for some time too. In a world where a really, really good employee engagement percentage is in the early 80's, a common refrain from managers and others is that the wall of noise that hits workers every day means that productivity is not reaching the levels that are promised by the new tools at our disposal.

In this hyper connected world we have more and more channels to communicate through but less and less time to either create compelling content that really inspires people to go the extra-mile. The most pressing issue we see in the workplace today is how organisations can 'connect' with their employees and cut through the wall of noise that results from the always on connectivity.

And so to the simple tips and take-away. If you had been anticipating getting a hitherto unknown magic formula for breakthrough results, then I'm afraid you'll be disappointed. In fact, the magic formula is quite simple and compelling communication results are there for the taking.

Ultimately, achieving cut-through goes back to great storytelling and using stories to say it better, smarter, more innovatively and in a manner that activates the call to action. There are really just four simple rules and they have been at the heart of communications since the dawn of time:

1. Relevance: Is your story relevant to your audience? Does it bring fresh insight to them? If not, then it's just another piece of annoying junk mail for which your people have no time.
2. Speed: Is your story one that can be spread quickly in any channel? This means keeping it as short or as long as is needed. For instance, putting a 'For Sale' sign above your business is a two-word story that will spread like wildfire among your employees, clients, suppliers and competitors. Though it's not a strategy I'd recommend without good cause.
3. Repeat play: How often do you play the message back to your employees? Let's be honest, cut-through is not delivered in a once a year 'off-site', it's developed over time and by repeating your message in actions, in words and in results.
4. Quality: This speaks for itself but consistent quality takes time, practice and investment. As Dirty Harry once said "...everyone wants results, but not everyone is prepared to do what it takes to get them..." So quality is central to a good storyline and without it your message will be a flop.

Thankfully we live in a world where information and knowledge is easily shareable and accessible. But we also live in a world where media organisations want us to nod off only after we've looked at their news site for the 100th time that day. It's a world where many of us get a twitch when we don't have our phone, phablet, tablet or, god help us, our wearable connection near to hand.

So in this world raising your message above the noise means taking the time to figure out what you want to say, why it's important to people and then distilling it into a story as compelling as the sunrise on a bright new day.

After all isn't that the kind of communication you'd want to get.

Ends.

## We Need to Talk About Porn. #37

By Maryrose Lyons



Mary Rose Lyons pictured at the IMAGE Networking Breakfast, in association with Arnotts, KBC and No. 7, at The Marker Hotel. Photo: Anthony Woods

### Synopsis:

The generation aged 18-24 have had more exposure to porn than any other generation in human history. Most of them started viewing porn aged around 13-15. Porn is a neural issue, not a moral one, and it is beginning to emerge as a societal one. • Compulsive pornography users are unable to have sex in the real world. • Women are made to feel inadequate; makes them believe that they have to behave in a certain way in order to be attractive. • A whole generation is growing up with very misguided beliefs about what sex is really like. We have to do something about it. But who's going to start the conversation? What better place than Congregation?

### 4 Takeaways:

1. 18-24 year olds have had more exposure to porn than any other generation in human history. Most of them started viewing porn aged around 13-15.
2. Porn is a neural issue, not a moral one, and it is beginning to emerge as a societal one.
3. I believe it is imperative that parents begin a dialogue with their kids warning them about the long-term health effects of porn. But many are ill equipped to talk about social media, let alone accessing porn.
4. Congregation is an opportunity to



Porn triggers the release of dopamine in the brain, so the more often you watch it and get that dopamine hit, the more tolerance your brain has to it. Your brain needs new and more exciting images and this forces the need for increased stimulation for the same amount of dopamine. They also leads to harder, weirder porn, all of which is freely available within one click.

Porn is a neural issue, not a moral one, and it is beginning to emerge as a societal one.

- Compulsive pornography users are unable to have sex in the real world.
- Women are made to feel inadequate; makes them believe that they have to behave in a certain way in order to be attractive.
- A whole generation is growing up with very misguided beliefs about what sex is really like.

We have to do something about it.

But who's going to start the conversation? How many families do you know that are seriously talking about porn with their kids?



I have a particular research interest in how teens use social media. From that has sprung a desire to help parents to talk to their tweens and teens about social media. This whole area of porn and indeed, the pornification of society, is one that fascinates me. I feel sorry for this first generation who are suffering the ill effects of porn. In a way we have let them down.

start the conversation and brainstorm some ideas.

### About Maryrose Lyons:

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Brightspark Consulting. I refuse to write about myself in the third person! I've been doing digital marketing since it was invented. Most of my time is spent coming up with social media strategies, creating sharable visual content out of data, and playing with cards on Twitter.

### Contacting Maryrose Lyons:

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You can follow Maryrose on [Twitter](#), [Brightspark Consulting Website](#), [email](#) or at the bar in the pub on Saturday night.

Now we need to start conversations to help the young ones coming through. I can't see the Department of Education biting the hand off me to introduce this to schools! Look at the reaction to Junior Cert changes... can you imagine the revolt amongst teachers if they are asked to talk porn? :)

So I thought what better place to start the conversation and to brain storm some ideas for change than Congregation2014?

I will be really looking forward to sharing some of my research findings with you and to opening the floor to a conversation that could seriously impact on young people's lives.

Research released by the UK think-tank IPPR found that eight out of ten 18-year-olds think it's too easy to accidentally view explicit images while surfing the internet. Two thirds of young women and almost half of young men agree that "it would be easier growing up if pornography was less easy to access for young people".

Even the kids are asking for our help.

Will you be there?

## How Social is Social Media? #38

By Andrew Lovatt



### Synopsis:

Before social media you would meet new people through friends, one at a time. Now you can add thousands of friends with a click. Where is the value in these friendships?

### 4 Takeaways:

1. Differentiate between commercial Social Media, private & personal, and social change.
2. What is the true value of a Social Media contact?
3. Does Social Media dilute real relationships?
4. Social Media is a multi-faceted set of channels, not a unified field.

### About Andrew Lovatt:

Andrew Lovatt began life as a writer, and to this day much of the internet is about "the story". He founded Red Moon Media in 1995 after returning from the USA and his baptism in the early internet. His current interests are in what value we get from the internet. Real value needs to be questioned at this juncture. He is managing director of [Red Moon Media](#).

### Contacting Andrew Lovatt:

You can follow Andrew on [Twitter](#), connect with him through [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).



Social Media is off the rails. Everyone working in the field is looking for the Holy Grail, some "sociable" trick that will deliver Facebook-like numbers. Currently, social media is all about the numbers. You need millions of users to "make a buck". But is that what social media is really about? Or is it the best we can do with this medium?

Before Social Media you met new friends through other friends, business contacts through known business people, etc. You likely remember that this was an organic process. It took time. But there was a known value in all the relationships. Today, you can add "friends" even if you don't know them - with one click. This has diluted the value of contacts, while enabling millions to "self promote" through the social media channels.

This dilution of the value of relationships raises other questions. Is Social Media only about promotion? There are millions of people out there with big egos happy to blow their own trumpet. Companies now lead the pack in terms of endless social media releases. Individuals promote their jobs and careers. Others use it as a friends and family album, and seem happy enough to ignore the fact that all their personal details and all their relationships are no longer private but regularly seen by the NSA and other agencies.

Social Media encourages us to connect with people we don't know. That is both its strongest and weakest value. Strong in the sense that it allows us to reach out to new people. Weak in that the value of connecting to them may be, and is likely to be, of very low value. These "friends" are at best "online acquaintances".

For the mainstream commercial Social Media channels, the more the merrier. They get their value from the high numbers of people using them. They have very little concern or focus on the value to the user. However, they spend a lot of time figuring out new

ways to monetise the traffic and page displays. Both corporate and private users seem happy enough to have 1000's of followers. Converting those followers to something of more value now requires "expert knowledge" and an industry has sprung up to cater to it. So Social Media is no longer an even playing field. Those who succeed in it are possibly very unique and "go viral" or they are paying experts to tweak the whole process. And it has become an increasingly long and complex process to convert these weak "friends" into a contact of value. This is usually a dollar value.

The definition of Social Media is changing with the advent of sharing Apps, such as SnapChat etc, and the growth of socially-conscious channels such as [change.org](http://change.org) and [avaaz.org](http://avaaz.org) - both channels where you can support social, economic and political causes. The global reach and power of these channels is changing the way individuals engage with the world. It may even change the way democracy works.

We tend to understand Social Media as a commercial channel, but increasingly the technology is being used for non-commercial purposes. Our approach to Social Media needs to take into account that it is not a unified field or a one size fits all medium. We will need many hats to deal with the emerging Social Media landscape. We also need to understand and differentiate the value to be gained from each.

## What hope for us, the anti-social? #39

By Alastair Mc Dermott



### Synopsis:

Social media is not for everyone. Make a conscious decision on whether it's for you.

### 4 Takeaways:

1. Social media is not for every business owner, nor for every business.
2. It's ok if it is not for you, but make an informed decision rather than just shying away from it due to lack of knowledge or time.
3. If you decide to do social media, do your audience - and more importantly yourself - a massive favour: find out how to do it right.
4. The US Air Force is more astute than one might expect.

### About Alastair McDermott:

Alastair McDermott is an online business and technology consultant specialising in growing professional services businesses by using technology more effectively. He blogs, podcasts and makes media of all kinds at [WebsiteDoctor.com](http://WebsiteDoctor.com)

### Contacting Alastair

#### McDermott:

You can find out about Alastair on his [Website](#), connect with him on his [work](#) and [personal Twitter](#) account or like him on [Facebook](#).



### What hope for us, the anti-social?

For those of us who instinctively feel that our personal lives are private, and don't particularly want to share our thoughts on the latest news item with the world - what hope for us?

For those of us who are very social in person, in our element at parties and meet ups, to which we're often not invited nor even aware of because we don't have an active Facebook account - what hope for us?

For those of us who do not have time to use - or learn to use - the latest social media network or tools, while running a business - what hope for us?

Fear not - this post is not some kind of piteous plea for your sympathy. But in this age of social media dominance, I do believe that these are some of many issues that we encounter, and they are something I ponder on occasion. I have some answers, but not perfect ones, and I'd like to hear your ideas.

### On privacy

I'm a believer in privacy and digital rights. The [EFF](#) is my charity of choice - the US is a world-leader in technology and it is the front-lines in the fight to retain privacy, with the government agencies picking over the corpse of American citizens' rights. Europe is not much better, but at least has the decency to claim to believe in personal privacy, even if acting contrary.

That said, I find it hard to see how any business owner can maintain privacy and also effectively promote and operate a business. In fact, it seems to me that they are mutually exclusive.

Even before social media, a business owner already left a trail of personal contact

details everywhere - perhaps your first business name when you registered as a sole trader has your old address and phone number, your Limited Company registration your latest. Your domain name registration gives us your email address, which leads us to your other 4 domains. Contact info on your old website that you replaced but is still on the web server.

Someone identifying online only by a pseudonym can very often be tracked back to a specific person. Maybe you mentioned your dog's name on a pet owners forum, and we know you're from Waterford because of the motor mechanic you recommended 4 years previously on a different site with the same username. Far fetched? No, it's surprisingly easy to follow the digital trails.

And now with social media, users want to talk to people, not to faceless businesses. If you don't add your personality to your business, is there being much point in being there?

Therefore I think that we need to accept as business owners that we can have less expectation of privacy than we might otherwise. And do what we can to protect it while balancing that with business promotional needs.

On being part of the conversation

I didn't join Facebook as an early adopter, unlike many of my peers. When I finally did, I wasn't particularly enamoured. I'm not sure how to put it, but Facebook just isn't quite my style. Interestingly, [Twitter](#) is.)

When I closed my Facebook account for the first time, I noticed that I was getting left out of things. Social outings, birthday parties, friends meeting up spontaneously after work, that sort of thing, all frequently organised on Facebook.

I couldn't help a friend manage their "fan page" without an account. Links to unknown somethings behind the Facebook login screen were taunting me when they arrived in my inbox. "(I was missing out on [a really good cat video](#))".

For those reasons, I gave up my temporary boycott and came back onboard. Like many techies, I still don't like Facebook, but I'll put up with it so that I can administer Pages, group message with friends, and join private groups for WordPress, podcasting, and more. I may even put effort into promoting [my business there](#) at some point.

It's interesting to me that although Twitter seems to have less to pull me back in, I've never felt the need to close [my account there](#)... perhaps simply because it feels like less work, less invasive.

I think the conclusion here is that as a [business](#) owner, there's simply too much happening or being facilitated by Facebook for me not to be on there regularly. Currently I check a couple of times a month, and that probably should be more often.

On finding the time for social media

A simple business truism: if something is important enough, you will find time for it.

If you are finding it difficult to spend time on social media for your business then either it is not important enough, or it IS important enough and you just don't recognise that.

Therefore I believe it is important that every business owner have a good understanding of social media basics, so that you can make that call for yourself. Everyone's circumstances will differ - for some industries and customer demographics, social will be less important than others. For some businesses the owner may have a particularly good grasp of using social, and use it effectively despite it not being as important in that demographic.

Social media is inherently a timesink. It's very easy to "spend 5 minutes checking Facebook and Twitter" and to surface an hour and a half later. Discipline is required. A strategy is required. Process is required. And **promotional content** is required.

Apart from self-discipline, a good solution to the timesink problem is pre-scheduling and automated posts. I strongly encourage anyone feeling overwhelmed with time costs to look at this - the **Buffer** and **Hootsuite blogs** are great places to start on that - **more on this topic here from Eoghan**. For dealing with negativity, look up the **US Air Force blog** response flowchart (really)!

Whatever you do with social, learn the basics so you're making an informed decision and you're aware of the choice you're rejecting if you do so. Even if you do reject it, register accounts with your business name anyway so that you can revisit your decision later.

If you decide to commit to it, take the time to learn, and measure to ensure it's working for your business. There's only one resource you can't renew, earn or make more of - your time.

In conclusion

This isn't a plea for sympathy or rant about the negatives. I know there is tremendous value in social media for many businesses. Alternatively, it may be more damaging to your business for you to waste time on social media than not have a presence.

The trick is to identify how and why it is valuable for you, and to ensure you have the knowledge and business processes set up to get that return on investment.

As I said, these are my answers to some questions. If you have better or different answers - or even different questions - I'd like to hear them.

# Three in a bed: the complex relationship between search, content and social media. #40

By Calvin Jones



## Synopsis:

It can be a hot, steamy, sometimes tempestuous affair, but understanding the relationship between search, content and social media is crucial to getting your business noticed online.

## 4 Takeaways:

1. STOP thinking of SEO, Content Marketing and Social Media as separate entities.
2. Put high value, relevant content at the core of a coherent, integrated "customer attraction strategy".
3. Relevance is the key to content that resonates with customers AND search engines.
4. Understand what your customers and prospects want, then give it to them.

## About Calvin Jones:

Calvin Jones is a writer and online content specialist based in West Cork. He is co-author (with Damian Ryan) of "Understanding Digital Marketing" and "The Best Digital Marketing Campaigns in the World". In his "spare time" runs Ireland's leading [wildlife and nature](#) website.

## Contacting Calvin Jones:

You can follow Calvin on Twitter [here](#) (writing / digital) and [here](#) (wildlife). For business stuff you'll find him on



Do you have a social media strategy for your organisation? How about a search optimisation strategy, or the current darling of online marketing gurus everywhere... a content strategy?

If you have a strategy for each of these things, then bravo! You're head and shoulders above the competition. You're also behind the times!

Same-same but different: when search is social media is content

In the night market of Luang Prabang in the People's Republic of Laos, (where I find myself writing this little missive for Congregation) you'll find t-shirts and other tourist paraphernalia sporting the slogan "Same same... but different". It's a ubiquitous phrase used by locals and adopted by travellers across Southeast Asia, and is used in countless situations where things are very similar, or can be bundled together, despite their obvious differences.

I couldn't help but put a digital spin on it.

The truth is that the days when you had the luxury of considering the various facets of your online marketing separately are long gone (I have my doubts they ever existed at all... but that's a topic for an entirely different blog post).

Considering search optimisation without developing a strategy for creating high-value content to engage and retain attention is pretty pointless. Creating great content without a social media strategy to share, amplify and build relationships these days is at best shortsighted. And ignoring the way social signals inform how search engines index and rank your content is a sure-fire way to consign your business to internet obscurity.

[LinkedIn](#), and of course he's on [Facebook here](#), but mostly on the Ireland's [Wildlife page here](#), and on [Google Plus](#).

You can also check out his websites at [www.cjwriting.com](http://www.cjwriting.com) and [www.digitalmarketingsuccess.com](http://www.digitalmarketingsuccess.com).

The relationship between content, social media and search is a complex one, but its one you need to consider in a cohesive way if you want to make the most of your opportunities online.

### Search engines and the tireless quest for relevance

When push comes to shove a click-through from a search engine results page is still the way most businesses connect with most of their online prospects for the first time. It's the genesis of the most crucial relationship in your organisation... so on a list of business priorities search should still be right up there.

When it comes to analysing your online content search engines are only really interested in one thing: relevance. How well does a particular piece of content meet their customer's search query?

Search engines are obsessed with relevance. It's an obsession born not of some altruistic mission to make the web a better, more navigable place (no matter how much they might like you to believe the notion); but of a much deeper business imperative. By delivering better search results a search engine retains and increases its share of the search market. Bigger audiences attract more advertisers, and more advertisers generate more revenue. It's simple economics.

Stop worrying about search engine updates... focus on delivering value

Assessing content relevance is a complex business, and search algorithms are constantly tweaked and refined to improve results.

As search continues to evolve, and search engines become better at understanding context and intent, the effectiveness of "traditional" search ranking factors will continue to wane, and the importance of understanding your customers and delivering genuinely valuable, relevant content that resonates with them will become ever more important.

In a MarketingProfs Pro seminar I delivered not long ago I argued that the only real way to future-proof your SEO is to stop obsessing about pandas, penguins, hedgehogs, lamas or whatever else Google throws into its search ranking menagerie. Instead invest your energy and resources into understanding what your customers really want, and then give it to them.

It's a radical concept, but were in an era where the best way to optimise for search is to create and distribute high-value, relevant content that your customers love... and love to share.

There's a bit more to it than that, of course, but broadly speaking as long as you follow a few basic rules to make sure your content doesn't stump the search algorithms, then ticking the right boxes for your customers is going to tick the right boxes for the search engines too.

So your content strategy becomes part of your future proof SEO strategy, and vice versa.

Cutting through the background noise: social amplification

So where does social media come in? I guess the short answer is everywhere.

The social media platforms where your customers choose to hang out can be useful in so many ways.

They help you understand your audience and what resonates with them, so you can make your content more relevant and appealing.

They allow you to tap into trends and provide a rich seam of ideas and inspiration you can mine.

They help you build enduring, mutually beneficial relationships with your customers. They offer fertile ground where you can seed your best content, nurture it and watch it grow.

They amplify the reach of that content, helping it cut through the incessant background noise

All of those social signals... the likes, shares +1s, retweets and other interactions with your brand and your content... increasingly have a bearing on how search engines gauge relevance and rank your content in their results pages. So getting social also helps with your search optimisation, and feeds directly into your content strategy.

You can see where this is heading, right?

Get it together

If you're still treating search, content and social media as isolated elements in your digital marketing mix, STOP!

What you really need to do is work out a coherent customer attraction strategy (or whatever you want to call it) that integrates search optimisation and social media, with high-value, customer-centric content at its core. By doing that you'll improve your search performance, boost your social media profile and start attracting more customers to you through all of your online platforms.

Best of all though sharing valuable content regularly will establish you as an authority in your area of expertise. Customers will start to view you as a trusted source of information in your industry, someone who they can turn to for answers to their questions and solutions to their problems.

Who do you suppose those same people will turn to first when they're in the market to buy what you're selling?

# Catching Wildfire: Staying unsettled from rec.humor.funny to Twitter #41

By Dermot Casey



## Synopsis:

For the first twenty years electricity was used to generate light and for no other purpose. Then the electric motor was invented and unleashed an unprecedented revolution. We're still in the Light bulb era of Social Media. We are worried about the dangers and frivolous nature and engaged by how they can help in business while missing much of their important value. We should focus on how they can help us, on their untapped power, and how to move back and forth between the digital and the analog world.

## 4 Takeaways:

1. Social media predates what we think of as Social Media.
2. We keep reinventing these tools so they go to some fundamental element of who and what we are as humans.
3. Their simultaneous frivolity and depth is their essential strength and power.
4. You can't have one without the other. We've barely scratched the surface of how we can use Social Media. That's where the real fun begins.

## About Dermot Casey:

A husband of one, and a father of three, I help businesses deal with the complexities of strategy and technology. An adjunct lecturer in UCD, I'm a catalyst and a creator. Interested in paradoxes, mysteries and wicked problems. I read a lot, write and run



I can't think of a worse way to spend time than to take most of a weekend, drive across the country and discuss techniques to use Social Media to market your business. I can't think of a better way to spend a weekend than to engage with interesting people around how we share and shape the world we live in. From a distance Congregation may be either or both of these things. A bit like Social Media itself.

I first used Social Media in 1989. We called Usenet and there is a very small distance between it and social media we use today. I used it to consume volumes of Star Trek parodies on rec.humor.funny and have serious discussions on Neural Networks with researchers from around the world. What is most interesting about Social Media isn't its newness, it's that we keep making and remaking similar tools to help us sense and share and shape our world.

There is a joke that the phones in our pocket contain the all the knowledge of human history and we use them to throw birds at pigs. And to understand what Kim Kardashian is up to. There are complaints of a dumbing down of society of disconnectedness and a distraction caused by Social Media. And while there are problems with Social Media we are focusing on the wrong things. The simultaneously profound and frivolous nature of Social Media goes to the core of what it is. This is the essential paradox at the heart of Social Media, something we must live with, rather than resolving, fixing or curing. This dual nature of Social Media is like a magnet. All magnets have a north and a south pole. Neither can exist without the other. The poles exist not in isolation from each other but by virtue of each other. What we should focus on is how we can use these Social Magnets to build Maglev trains for the mind for the 21st Century.

My father used tell me a story of an old lady we'll call Mary Dwyer. Mary's house got 'the electric' during rural electrification in the 1930's. Asked how she found electricity Mary declared it to be a wonderful invention. As it got dark in the evening she could turn on the light in her living room, then she could easily find the candles and light them before turning the light off again. Much like Mary we've only begun to scratch the surface of the power and potential of these tools.

a little and don't draw nearly enough. Intently curious I'm trying to make sense of the world.

### Contacting Dermot Casey:

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You can follow Dermot on [Twitter](#) or read his [work](#) and [play](#) thoughts.

Marshall McLuhan said, "First we shape our tools and then our tools shape us." Social Media is wildfire with the ability to help us shape the world. It is more than content or container, it is a living process that is reflective of the world that created it, consuming, creating and renewing. Josie Fraser in a blogpost described the purpose of education as "being to enable people to understand, navigate, contribute to, challenge and change the world." And that it needs to ensure that we are "equipped to be unsettled, to be confronted by difference, to be changed, and to effect change."

I realize that I've been learning to be unsettled for 20 years on Social Media. I've used it to challenge and to extend my thinking. I've used it to keep me honest. I've used it to frame my thoughts by engaging in conversation. People continually challenge me and educate me. And recently I've grasped that it in these environments that we can generate dynamic intersections of thought that are at the heart of innovation and knowledge creation. The skills we most need in the 21st century.

This is not a suggestion that Social Media is a simple way fix the world. What I will suggest is that Social Media can help us orient and understand the world, in deep and important ways. The best places are what Jurgen Habermas refers to as life-worlds "communities where the emphasis is on natural, conversational human interactivity". They are the places of serious play. Where frivolity and depth generate and create in unexpected and surprising ways. As humans we learn through engagement and experience. As people we construct our experience of the world. A child stumbles a thousand times learning to walk as it makes sense of the world.

Many of the traditional structures of society are designed to construct specific experiences and to keep us settled rather than unsettled. The criticism of second level of education is on the basis that it treats minds as containers to be filled rather than fires to be lit. Social Media creates a new space for play and sense making. The creation and recreation of these tools from Usenet, bulletin boards, CompuServe and Boards.ie to Facebook, Twitter reflect an important dimension of human nature

Plato said, "that a man cannot search either for what he knows or for what he does not know. He cannot search for what he knows -- since he knows it, there is no need to search -- nor for what he does not know, for he does not know what to look for." Unconsciously I have relied on Social Media to break through this problem. It has been an engine of serendipity. In our messy world with wicked problems that we face in the 21st century we need these engines of serendipity to help us think and create to engage and in new and innovative ways. We need social lodestones to help us navigate and create new paths in the world.

Five years ago a single Tweet by Mark Little changed both our lives. It created opportunities and possibilities for me that I wasn't even aware existed before the adventure that was Storyful. The virtual was a catalyst for the real. And that is something that we must remember. We are embodied; our cognition relies on our physical presence in the world. Much as writing augmented and extended our minds, Social Media does the same. And we cannot stay disembodied.

In the end we need to bring this vast digital sensor network back to the analog and to engage with the real world. Social Media has made me more social in the real world. The monthly meets ups of the #dalkeyopen crew. Business partners, clients, friends, work of the PTA, raising money for charity all started online and continue daily in digital and analog form. A decade ago I got involved in a very small way with the campaign against eVoting which was collective action originating on social networks

and extending into the real world. More recently the change in Irish Waters access to PPS numbers and the changes to fees in FOI legislation were driven by action that drew its energy online.

In an uncertain world Social Media can equip us to be unsettled. It's why I am looking forward to Congregation in a spirit of hope and expectation, a personal adventure of the unforeseeable a digital engagement in the analog world. Some of the people going to Congregation have already been catalysts in my life. I look forward to the new sparks of wildfire this weekend may bring.

Some links and background:

The metaphor of the magnet draws on other work and I first used it in a paper on called Questioning cultural orthodoxy: Policy implications for Ireland as an Innovative Knowledge-Based Economy which can be found [here](#)

The bookend of the Storyful journey and the Mark Little tweet can be found [here](#)

The <http://www.evoting.cs.may.ie/> which told the history of the evoting campaign appears to have disappeared in the last year.

Josie Frasier's Blogpost can be found [here](#)

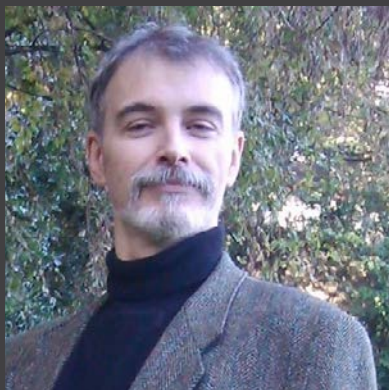
Josie's quote came via [Catherine Cronin](#)

A key catalyst in my thinking for over a decade has been [Bernie Goldbach](#) (+[Twitter](#))

[#dalkeyopen](#) and <https://twitter.com/dalkeyopen> and monthly in Dalkey curated and founded by the irrepressible [Joe Garde](#)

## A Map of the Irish Twittersphere #42

By Niall Kearns Mills



### Synopsis:

Mapping the Irish Twittersphere by audience, or at least the part of it relating to public debate and politics, shows up some interesting connections and cross-overs. The end result suggests that the Twittersphere is quite a coherent reflection of Irish public debate.

### 4 Takeaways:

1. The followers of Irish accounts fall naturally into "communities of interest."
2. Politics and the 'commentariat' (mainstream media & journalists) are more separate than together.
3. There is probably a 'filter bubble' effect for Twitter followers of public debate in Ireland.
4. The social media landscape of Ireland reflects its offline media landscape more than one might have hoped.

### About Niall Kearns Mills:

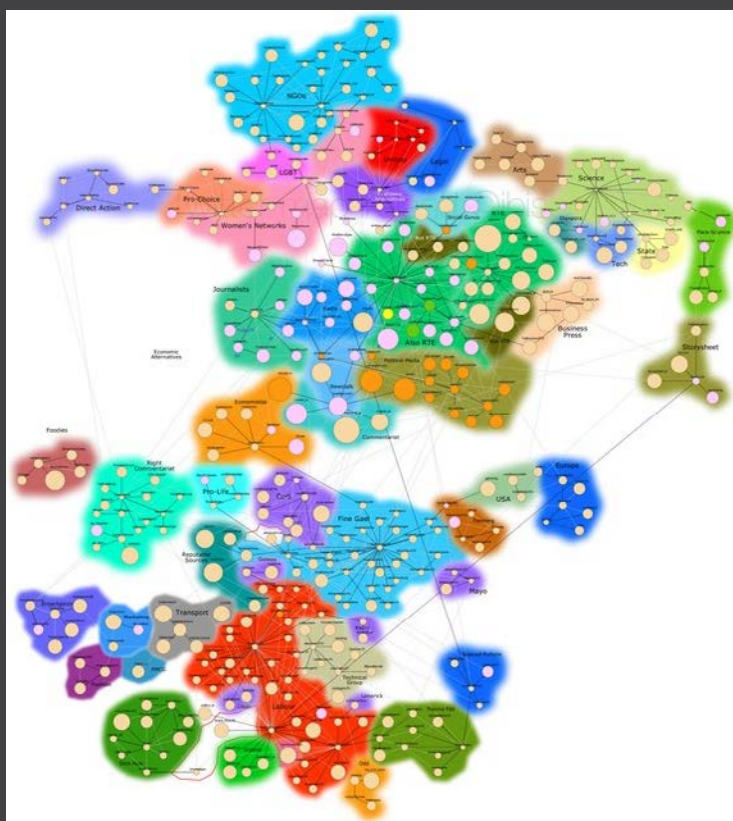
Niall has been involved in the online world of Irish politics for nearly two decades, having cut his teeth building the 1997 Democratic Left election website. With Irene Gahan, he started Ireland's first internet training company, The Interactive Avenue, in 1996. Since then, he has been variously Fianna Fáil's webmaster (2002-2009), and a consultant on the internet and social media for the EU in Ireland (2008-), as well as training and devel-

Back in 2012, I decided it might be interesting to try to get a handle on the broad landscape of Twitter in Ireland, at least as it relates to public debate and commentary (more the latter than the former, really).

As part of this, I wondered if it were possible to create a "Twitter map" of at least the political level in Ireland. Using the Twitter API and some rather laborious data-crunching, the map you see here was constructed. It's based on the audience crossovers between different accounts – there were other ways the accounts could be compared (who retweets who, for example), but I was most interested in audiences.

So on the map accounts are placed closest to those they share the greatest number of followers with, and as far as possible close to those who they share the second greatest number of followers with. About 600 accounts are included, all with either a large number of followers or with an obvious political bent. Big version of the map is [here](#) (1.3Mb):

Luckily, after the work put in, interesting things do fall out of the data. Audience crossovers seem to produce some natural groupings.



[http://www.ibis.ie/research/twittermap\\_thumb.jpg](http://www.ibis.ie/research/twittermap_thumb.jpg)

Yes, we wound up with something that looks a bit like two slightly separated continents with a couple of archipelagos. Not actually deliberate, the connections work out that way, and in detail that's not quite what's there.

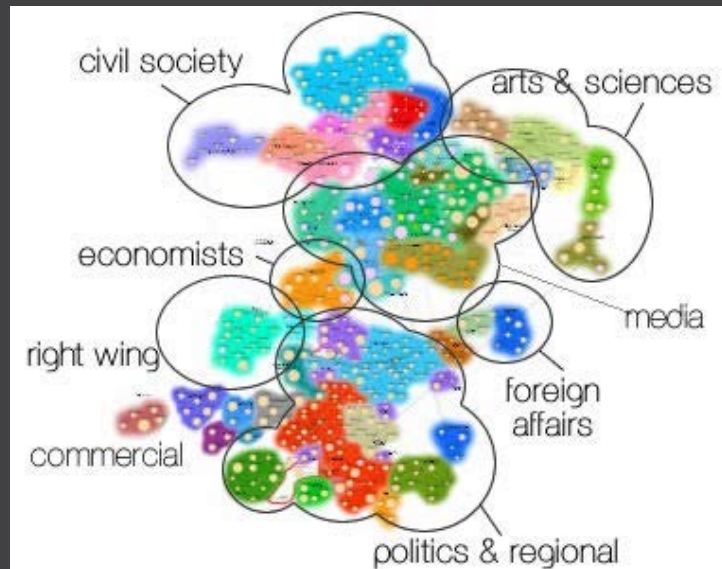
In fact, in the top left we have Civil Society – women's networks, NGOs, the unions,

oping for a variety of clients in the government, commercial, non-profit, and political sectors, particularly in the areas of information architecture and integration of online and offline work processes. His current interests include the development of linguistic AI, the relationship between online/ social media, politics, and society, and the creation of a digital research atlas.

#### Contacting Niall Kearns Mills:

You can follow Niall on [Twitter](#) or contact him on [email](#).

LGBT, economic alternatives, and law (presumably, lawyers active on Twitter tend to be those involved in social movements).



[http://www.ibis.ie/research/twmap\\_thumb\\_grouped.jpg](http://www.ibis.ie/research/twmap_thumb_grouped.jpg)

Top right are the Arts and Sciences, along with Tech, State bodies, and the diaspora. No, I have no idea why the diaspora goes there.

The main body of the top section is Media, and most of that is RTE – in fact RTE has a couple of sub-clusters, and some journalists are only labelled “Not RTE”. There’s a distinct Political and Business media, while Radio, Newstalk, and individual journalists also separate out. Social Media Gurus also fall into this large grouping, as does a more general Commentariat.

The Commentariat then bridge across – via David McWilliams – to the Economists, who were very prominent in the Great Recession.

The Right Wing consists of conservative commentators and the pro-life movement – the former with some connections back to the Economists.

Politics and Regional – well, we knew that Irish politics is always local, and here it shows up on the Twitter map, luckily. Louth, Limerick, Kerry, Cork, Mayo and Galway cluster round their politicians, and the politicians all cluster together. Well, except Sinn Féin, who are only weakly attached to the rest of “mainstream politics”. Even the Technical Group is more strongly connected. Seanad Reform, connected by speaking out on reform of the Seanad, form a small group over to the right by FF, connected back by a really long cross-map connection provided by Senator Zappone, who links back to LGBT/Women’s Networks.

Last, we have Foreign Affairs, which encompasses the Dept of Foreign Affairs, which in turn connects US affairs and EU affairs. The Gathering connects the USA group to Farming, which connects back into Politics and Regional.

I haven’t really grouped the Commercial accounts, over at the bottom left, because they’re only rather weakly linked through the Transport cluster - Labour links to Dublin City Council, they link to Dublin Bus, Dublin Bus to Hailo, and Hailo further out into the Commercial world. And that’s an interesting point in itself.

I hope to update this map this year, and it will be interesting (I hope) to look at the changes since this time two years ago.

## How do you justify a \$10 Billion Valuation? #43

By Geoff Lovatt



Astronomical valuations for tech companies are nothing new, in fact it's commonplace nowadays. The tricky part is justifying these sky high estimations and that problem becomes even harder when the company doesn't have any real turnover to date. This is Snapchat's problem. Yes Snapchat, the app made famous for being used by teens and others alike to send each other disappearing sexts, is apparently worth US\$10 Billion! Maybe proving once and for all that there's no such thing as bad publicity.

### Synopsis:

Astronomical valuations for tech companies are nothing new, in fact it's commonplace nowadays. The tricky part is justifying these sky high estimations and that problem becomes even harder when the company doesn't have any real turnover to date. This is Snapchat's problem. Yes Snapchat, the app made famous for being used by teens and others alike to send each other disappearing sexts, is apparently worth US\$10 Billion! Maybe proving once and for all that there's no such thing as bad publicity.

### 4 Takeaways:

1. What a Snapchat Story is and how it has revolutionised the ephemeral content app.
2. How Snapchat Stories have created a new era of event participation.
3. How diversifying their product has allowed Snapchat to grow exponentially and created new revenue streams for the company.
4. Creating a Peer-to-Peer payment method promises to change mobile payments.

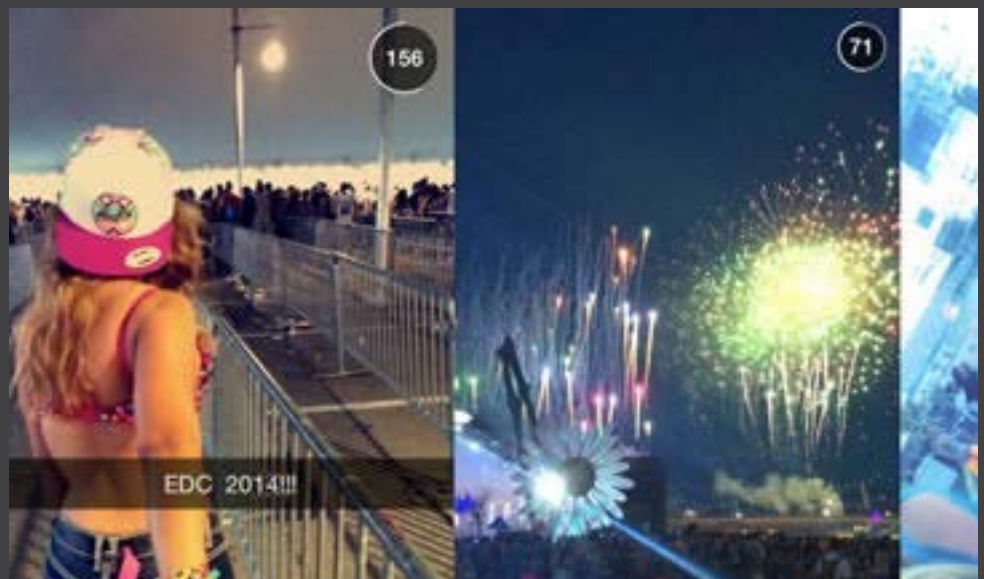
### About Geoff Lovatt:

Geoff Lovatt manages marketing at Red Moon Media, Clear Thinking - Creative Vision. A heavy user of social media since college days, he now casts a professional eye on the medium.

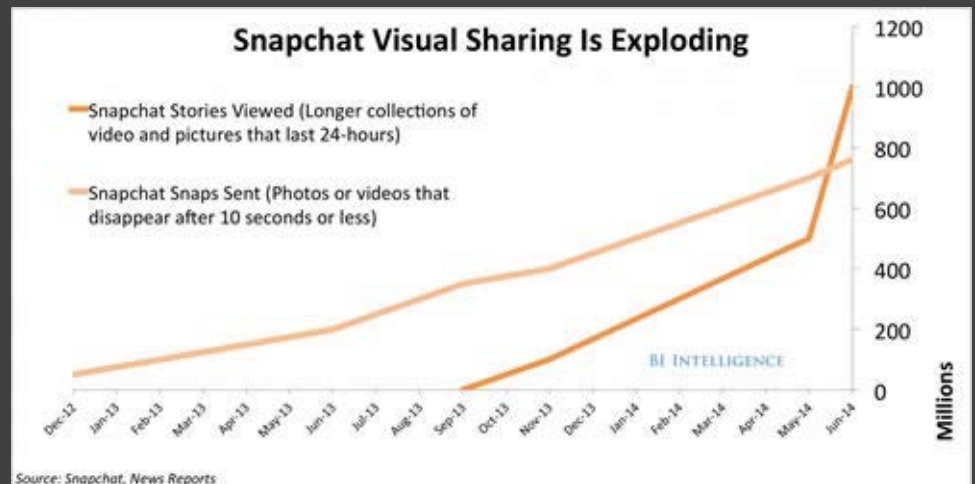
### Contacting Geoff Lovatt:

You can contact Geoff by [email](#) or by calling [+353 45 486828](#).

So how do you attempt to validate, and more importantly monetise, an app with such a large estimated worth but no real turnover? Snapchat might just have the answer. Earlier this year Snapchat added a new feature called Our Story to its Recent Updates section. The Our Story feature is a central live feed of user generated videos and pictures usually lasting 2-3 minutes from a particular global event. Users can contribute to the Our Story feature by having their location services enabled to prove they are at the event before submitting their content for review by Snapchat. All of the content from the live feed can be viewed multiple times but only lasts for 24 hours or the duration of the event.

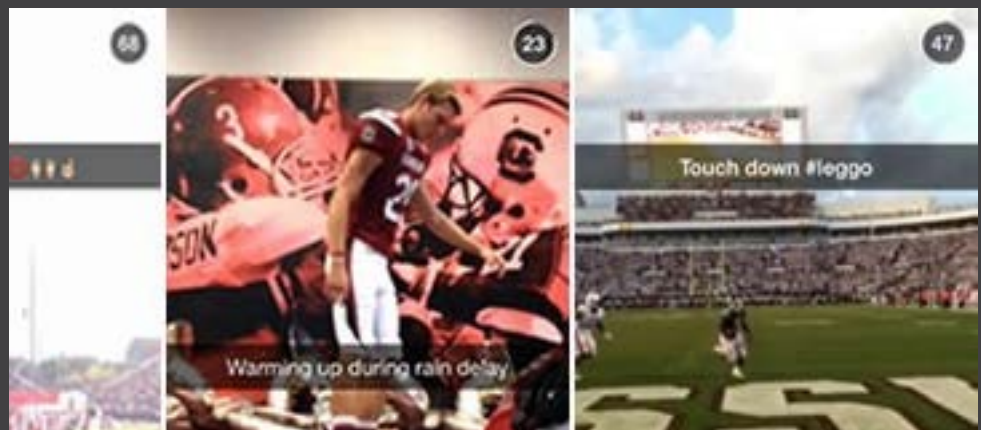


Initially Our Story was tested at a handful of music festivals like EDC and Lollapalooza and after great engagement with users was rolled out to more events such as American College Football games, The FIFA World Cup and even things a bit more obscure like Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0BclkvvZ0>) in Mexico City and the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, the world's largest hot air balloon festival. The addition of the Our Story feature has proven a roaring success for the company. According to Snapchat the number of daily views for their Stories has now surpassed the number of daily views for individual snaps and stands at over 1 billion.



What's more impressive than the numbers though is the thinking behind the move towards live events. In doing so, Snapchat has created a new era of event participation and live broadcast by giving users the chance to experience, and contribute to, global events from multiple points of view in near real time with ease and convenience. The Stories are always expertly edited and deliver exactly what the name implies, a story of the given event from beginning to end, and for the first time ever allows users access to what in the past would have gone unseen.

The American College Football Stories usually show fans en route to the game, behind the scenes footage from both teams dressing rooms shot by the players themselves, a fans view of a touchdown from the packed crowd, songs being sung by the fans and finally who won! According to Snapchat CEO Evan Spiegel more people are watching College Football on Snapchat than on TV (100m vs. 2.6m). This high level of engagement not only helps to build a sense of community for Snapchat it also attracts new users who may have been turned off in the past by their unjust seedy reputation.



In October the company expanded its Stories feature to include College Campus, a brief insight into daily college life at 4 US colleges, UCLA and Penn State among them, with a live feed of campus generated content. Except this time Snapchat tried a bit of clever marketing by limiting the ability to both post and watch the feed to users actually on the college campus. Creating exclusivity around the College Campus Stories feature is a great way to increase demand for it and who knows maybe even improve class attendance rates for fear of missing out!

By making the move into live broadcast Snapchat has not only diversified its product and strengthened its brand, they've also managed to figure out a way to monetise an app for self-destructing photos and videos. One option available might be to offer

sponsorship of a live event in the Our Story feature. This would be less intrusive to users than sponsored ads on or before individual snaps and also offer advertisers better targeting and fit for their brand. In October this year Snapchat rolled out its first sponsored ad. A twenty second trailer for the horror film Ouija, paid for and specially edited by Universal Studios to play in a similar fashion to other Stories. And this is what excites marketers and advertisers most about Snapchat, it's not their 100 million monthly active users, although that sure helps, it's the similarity to TV advertising that their platform provides. For now the Stories only last for between 2-3 minutes, but this could easily be increased as could the 24 hour lifetime.

Snapchat has also reportedly held negotiations to distribute other media content from both traditional mass media outlets like Time and CNN as well as new media from Vice, Spotify and Vevo in a new section within the app called Discover. And the news earlier this week could give a hint of another possible revenue stream Snapchat has in mind for the future, SnapCash. A joint venture with Square to offer users a Peer-to-Peer payment feature that has initially been advertised as being a handy way to send friends money. But who's to say it couldn't one day be used to pay for admission to an event, or extended behind the scenes footage, or a new music video not available elsewhere. The possibilities are limitless, much like Snapchats future seems to be if they can continue to grow and innovate with such ease. \$10 Billion could even end up looking like a bargain in a couple of years!

## Lights, Camera, Action ---- > Likes, Community, Advocates #44

By Fiona Ashe



### Synopsis:

Why is video exploding in popularity as a marketing tool? Here are some of the reasons why video is so persuasive along with a few tips on how to elevate your command of this magnificent medium.

### 4 Takeaways:

1. Evoke an emotional response.
2. Create a sensory experience for consumers.
3. Use text, audio, images and video effectively to convey your message.
4. Start at the end i.e. what is the message you want to leave viewers with?

### About Fiona Ashe:

Fiona Ashe is an award-winning video producer/director. She has a 20-year track record in professional film and video production and has achieved success with a viral video. Fiona is also a renowned presentation coach and excels at relaxing people in front of the camera. Through her digital agency, FlasheForward Communications, she designs and delivers content marketing training – with an emphasis on how to create content – for a variety of clients, including Fáilte Ireland, Irish Times Training and the Irish Internet Association. Her other skills include expert copywriting and screenwriting. She recently secured funding to write a feature film script, which will she will also direct.

When we meet people, we convey our personalities, our passions, and we build trust that forms a foundation for doing business together. But online this personal connection is more difficult to establish because potential customers can't see us smile, hear our tone of voice or feel our handshake. So we use the written word, audio, images and video to convey who we are and what values our brands represent. When used effectively, these enable us to attract new customers by creating experiences for them.

When consumers look at websites, they cannot taste the Irish sausages, touch the Irish knitwear or know what it feels like to windsurf in the Atlantic breeze. Therefore it's crucial to use words, sounds, images and visual storytelling to create a sensory experience for them i.e. what they will see, hear, touch, taste and smell. This will evoke an emotional response, which will make them want to have that experience in real life. Consumers buy for emotional reasons: it's about how you make them feel. Great storytelling is the most powerful and effective way to evoke emotions and compel people to purchase!



If a picture says a thousand words, then how many do you reckon a video says? According to Forrester Research, "1 minute of video is worth 1.8 million words." Imagine how long it would take to write 1.8 million words! It's quicker to make a video. Also, using video on your website is known to improve engagement, conversions and customer spend.

Visual storytelling is a method of forming a narrative using a crafted sequence of images...an incredibly effective, efficient and memorable way of delivering your message to your audience. Provided that it is done well! So here are some tips:

- Brainstorm lots of ideas.
- Keep your videos short and punchy. If they are longer than one minute, make sure They're incredibly captivating.
- Use humour.
- Be quintessential.
- Take off your superhero mask and let people get to know the real you.
- People love to put a face to a business so get ready for your close up!

### Contacting Fiona Ashe:

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You can follow Fiona on [Twitter](#) (personal) and [Twitter](#) (work), connect with her on [LinkedIn](#) or [e-mail](#) her.

Creativity is the highway to new and inspirational ideas. It pushes us to think differently, to be innovative. In this fast-changing digital world, where competition is fast and ferocious, creativity is essential for our businesses to survive and thrive! And video, when well executed, is one of the most powerful and affordable ways to channel that creativity to captivate your community.

## Has the postman read my email? #45

By Sharon Boyle



### Synopsis:

We tick boxes, impatient to use the new app we're signing up for, without giving it a second thought. We idly glance at display ads, wondering how they happen to be related to what we've been searching for. Who knows all this stuff about us? What information have we given away? Who did we give it to?

Social media platforms, social APIs and the lure of free apps have lowered our defences. Couple that with the electronic diary of our everyday lives that smartphones have become and what do you get? A starring role in your own (personalised) Truman Show.

### 4 Takeaways:

1. Know what you're agreeing to.
2. Check your app/social/browser settings regularly.
3. Take back some control of your personal data.
4. Resistance is futile, accept it if you want to use the service.

### About Sharon Boyle:

Sharon Boyle is a Lecturer in GMIT Mayo Campus. She lectures in digital media, eBusiness, and databases. She was part of the development team for the campus' new BSc. (Hons) in Digital Media & Society which examines the impact digital media technologies are having on society.

I don't consider myself to be a smartphone addict; I like the convenience of having internet on tap and an easy way to share photos and messages with my friends – but I don't check my phone every 35 seconds. I've always been pretty cagey about my personal information (the last time I was in the O2 store to renew a contract; it took three goes to guess my date of birth – they had to tell me in the end and made me change it to the real DOB).

So, why is it that when I look at app info on my phone and various social media accounts, I find I've given them all the information that anyone could need for identity theft? I gave Google my real date of birth, and many of these apps are able to link to my Google account. I rarely log out of my Google or Facebook accounts on my smartphone, tablet or desktop and what's worse is that this behaviour doesn't overly worry me.

If I browse through my smartphone's application manager, it's quite surprising to see some of the permissions the apps I've installed have. For example:

read my contacts, this includes my call logs, email communication with specific individuals. This information may be saved and shared without me knowing; call phone numbers without my intervention...seemingly this might result in unexpected charges or calls.

I know that certain apps need these permissions to function, but I can't help feeling that I don't look at permissions closely enough when I'm installing an app. If they have access to pretty much everything on my phone, what might they do with that information?

Then I look at my Facebook account – why does Angry Birds need to know my date of birth (luckily I lied to Facebook on this one)? This one did shock me, as I don't think I ever linked Angry Birds to my Facebook account, maybe someone using my iPad did, and, of course, I don't log out of my accounts

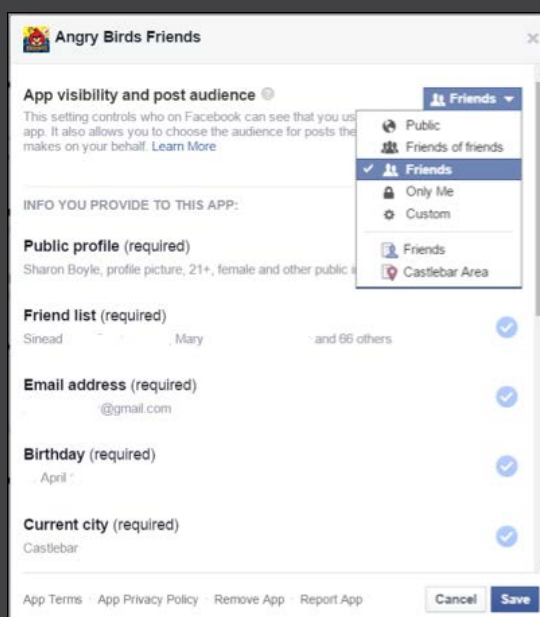


Figure 1 Angry Birds Friends settings on Facebook

Contacting Sharon Boyle:

You can follow Sharon on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or by [email](#).

There’s another “feature” in Facebook’s privacy settings that I haven’t checked before, Apps others use. My friends might be using an app that gives away my personal

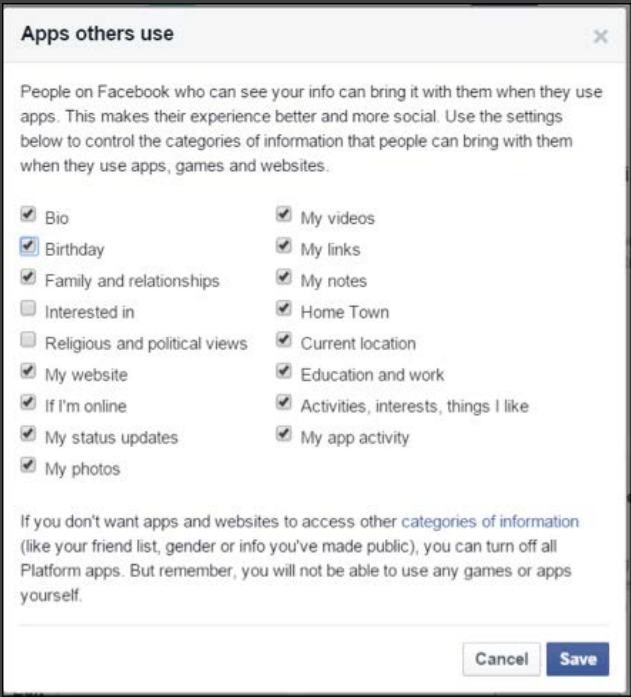


Figure 2 Apps others use screen in Facebook

The realisation is dawning on me that I’ve let my defences down. Before I had a smartphone or tablet, I always paid attention to what I was signing up for and what information I was giving away. Before I had a Google account and Chrome browser that integrated so many useful services, I always logged out of my Gmail account after checking my emails.

Did you know that Chrome has a security flaw – deemed a “feature” by Google? Logins and passwords for various services that we use are stored unencrypted if we tick yes to store password. This information is available on all devices that you use. I’m fully aware of this fact and take great care to tick “No” when I’m using Chrome.

I’m in for another surprise when I check my settings here; see Figure 3 (some info has been blanked out for security reasons).

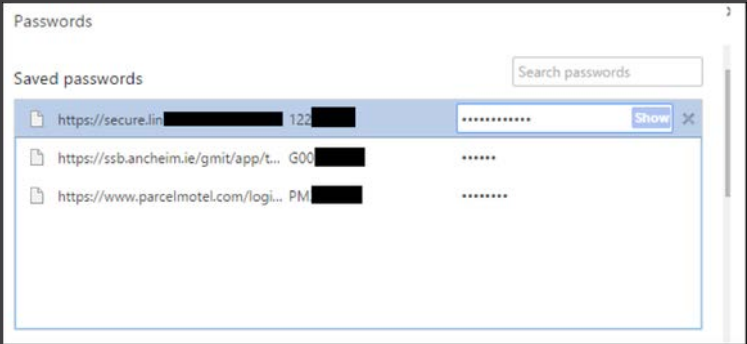


Figure 3 Chrome saved passwords

The first entry here is not mine, a friend of mine must have gone to a secure website while using my PC. Inadvertently she has stored her login and password information.

If I click on Show, I can see her password. The second entry is for a system that I use at work, I was sure that it hadn't been saved by Chrome, because I would be very careful about any of the systems I use. Yet there it is. The third entry has a pin number that relates to a service I use, and again, I can read the password if I click on show.

I have often idly wondered if Google was reading my emails – and to be honest, I really didn't care; what could those emails possibly contain that would be of use to anyone, if it makes Google happy to serve up a few personalised ads in exchange for a free email service, what harm could it be? I think many of us have considered our online habits to be of little interest to anyone, why would anyone try to find out our personal information/browsing habits, and what use could it be to them?

I did a fresh install of Firefox and installed a piece of software called Lightbeam, which tracks first and third party sites on the internet. After performing one Google search for "privacy online" and clicking on a link to Kidpower.org, here is the graph (figure 4):

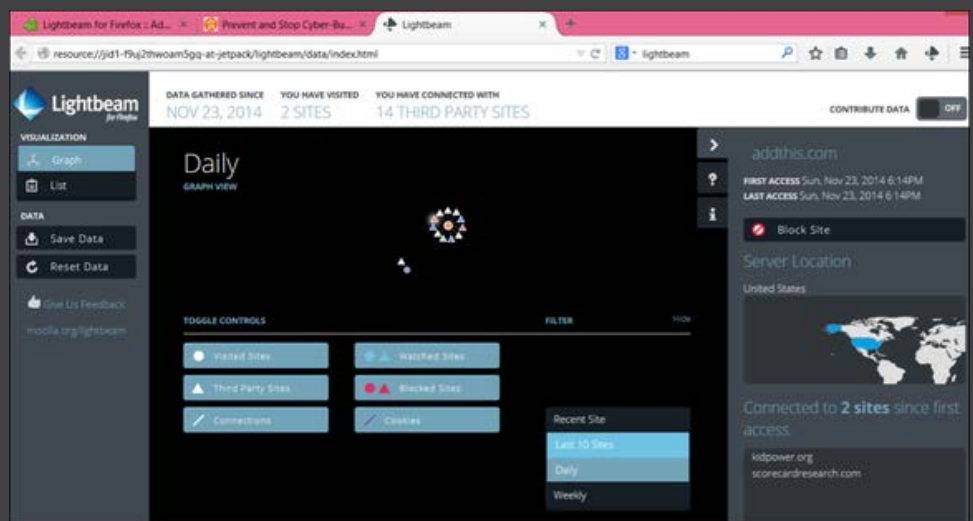


Figure 4 Lightbeam results in Firefox

The circle in the centre is the website I clicked into. The triangles surrounding it are third party sites that are interested in the fact that I clicked on this site.

Are we going to start taking our online behaviour more seriously? Are hacked webcams a game changer for us? Or should simple things like a stored password on Chrome or an app that knows our date of birth be more of a concern?

Some Useful links:

[Who's watching you online and how to stop them](#)

[Who's watching you online? FTC pushes 'Do Not Track' plan](#)

[Mozilla Lightbeam Shows Who's Watching You Online](#)

# So you think you want to become a media company? Here's how. #46

By John Collins



## Synopsis:

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The traditional media world is imploding and companies are under increasing pressure to product their own content. Before you embark on a Content Marketing strategy you should think carefully about what you want to achieve and how you are going to sustain it. Once you've done that, here's eight tips to help you write quality content.

## 4 Takeaways:

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1. Most content marketing strategies involve setting up an editorial calendar that becomes unsustainable for companies that do not have significant resources to devote to it.
2. You'll have far more success writing authentically about things related to your business than trying to be topical.
3. Content isn't cheap or easy. You'll have to invest either time or money - the choice is yours.
4. Here's 8 tips that will help you write content that will resonate with your audience.

## About John Collins:

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John Collins is managing editor at [Intercom](#), a software company that is fundamentally changing the way internet businesses connect with their customers. He is a journalist and editor with over 20 years experience covering technology and business issues, most recently for The Irish Times.



Every company is a media company now. So what are the implications of that?

One approach is content marketing. Get yourself an editorial calendar, write some blog posts related to topical industry or general events (nothing like the Halloween technology tips to generate traffic ;)), tweet out links to said articles three times a day, and sit back as your marketing funnel fills with new leads.

It's an oversimplification but it's also what much of the current advice around content marketing boils down to. Unless you are Nike or Guinness you have no business writing topical news related posts. It's not sustainable and you'll end up posting cute cat pictures or their equivalent because your editorial calendar says you are overdue a blog post.

Over the last three years Intercom has attracted an international audience and reputation thanks to the Inside Intercom blog. We write evergreen articles that are relevant to our customers, potential customers, influencers in our industry etc. That means topics like product management, design, customer success, and producing meaningful case studies of how people are using Intercom. These articles continue to attract traffic and social media comments months and even years after publication (which is why we never put publication dates on our articles).

Producing the blog required a significant investment of time by our co-founder Des Traynor and earlier this year Intercom doubled its bets on content by hiring me.

What follows is an edited version of the principles I share with the team at Intercom when they write posts for our blog.

### 1. Speak with authority

If you know what you are talking about, be confident in your written communications. Although don't confuse that with arrogance, or patronize your readers. You should have an opinion – preferably a strong, undiluted one.

## Contacting John Collins:

You can follow John on [Twitter](#) or visit the Intercom [blog](#).

### 2. Be yourself

John Collins #46 Internet-dog  
Unless you are an exceptionally good writer, like so good that you should be touting for a book deal, you are not going to sound authentic trying to be someone else. And really what's the point of that anyway?

The New Yorker cartoon was funny, and quite apt, in 1993. But in this hyper-social, over-sharing, always-on era with a few simple Google searches anyone can find out you are a dog, what kennel you came from, and where you went to dog training.



### 3. Be clear and concise

Write simply and clearly keeping in mind the audience you are writing for. In the case of Intercom that's people in the software business, potential customers, potential new colleagues, etc. Keep your sentences and paragraphs short. Remember you are fighting for people's attention, and they can be gone with a click, so get to the point.

### 4. Present your ideas visually

The human brain can process images 60,000 times faster than text. Which goes some way towards explaining why content with relevant images gets 70% more views than text only content.

### 5. Quality not quantity

Remember 27 million pieces of content are published every day, but 60 to 70% of content goes unused.

### 6. Write intriguing headlines

Your readers have limited time and there are competing demands on it – in many cases all they see is the headline before they decide to click through or not.



### 7. Punctuation matters

John Collins grammar

Because bad punctuation has the power to make you look really, really silly. In fact all grammar is important, so if you are serious about this buy a style guide like the best-selling AP Stylebook.

### 8. Engage with your audience

When you start writing a blog or any other public-facing communications, you have to be prepared to get into a conversation. Yes, there are times it will get ugly and messy, but if it doesn't you're not speaking with authority.

## Don't let the gurus bring you down. #47

By Mary Carty



### Synopsis:

Thinking about opportunities for marketers to engage with your audience beyond top 10 tips from dodgy gurus ...

### 4 Takeaways:

1. Your content is lazy.
2. Marketers, raise the bar!
3. I'm human, don't treat me like a robot.
4. Be honest and creative.

### About Mary Carty:

Mary Carty is a creative entrepreneur. Over the past ten years she has built a startup and run digital agency, Spoiltchild. Mary is passionate about building profitable businesses whose core product or service, comes from creative practices. She is an experienced mentor and advisor with a passion for startups.

### Contacting Mary Carty:

Say hi on [Twitter](#), [email](#), read about her [latest project](#) or connect on [LinkedIn](#)



I'm fed up with gurus. Fed up with 10 top tips. Totally fed up with quick fixes that treat me like a robot. I'm fed up with 'positive'. Not being positive meaning I must be a less effective human being. Most of all though, I'm fed up with lazy content.

I think it's time we called halt to the "like and share" generation. Time to make marketers honestly engage with me. God knows, I have my flaws and foibles. These very same flaws connect me to countless beings across the globe all wanting to make a connection.

Social media is truly amazing. Its full potential has yet to be discovered. Sure, I use it for business and pleasure purposes and have learned much along the way. But, I can't help feeling disappointed by the nature of the content on my feed each day. Surely social media is capable of much, much more?

I often wonder if today is the day, someone will blow my socks off. You may ask am I following the wrong people? Good question, but I really don't think so. I follow folks from all sorts of disciplines and industries.

There must be better ways of gaining my attention and appealing to my whole self. Top 10 tips don't cut it, I need something more. I need depth and character and shades of grey; discord, harmony and a touch of chaos. Some magic please, to help me stay.

I long for companies and individuals to take a more artistic approach, take some risks with their content. Why not take me on a journey, appeal to my spirit of adventure; give me something to smile about. Make me deeply question my beliefs. Give me something to reflect upon. If you speak to me in a spirit of curiosity and wonder, I'll friend you for life. Give me a reason to listen to you, not switch off.

With all this in mind; marketers have an amazing opportunity to raise the bar. We've

had enough dodgy gurus. Let's celebrate the diversity of human thought, behaviour, learning and experience and come up with more appealing content from now on. Let's raise our expectations. It's high time to bring on the dreaming.

# The lazy marketers guide to rocking conferences. #48

By Alan O'Rourke



## Synopsis:

Oh sure, you could travel to that great conference for work. Or how about don't and say you did! Here is how to do it.

## 4 Takeaways:

- 1. You do not have to go to every conference.
- 2. You can still rock the conference from your desk.
- 3. Automate your learning with IFTTT.
- 4. Great new easy content to share.

## About Alan O'Rourke:

Marketing Director at WorkCompass.com - Recovered Designer, sometimes Author and less times speaker.

## Contacting Alan O'Rourke:

You can follow Alan on [Twitter](#), connect with him on [LinkedIn](#) or check out [his blog](#).

5am start to make the airport, lugging bag and laptop to the venue, hope you can duck into a bathroom to clean up before you meet anyone important, did you remember the business cards? Deodorant? Breath mints? Now what talk should you watch? Ok time for coffee. I should talk to someone but do I carry my bags with me? Man it's warm in here. Ok this is a good talk. Oh oh, too much coffee. I need to get up and pee. Do I take my bags with me?

Damit I will hold it.

Good day. I learned loads. I better do a good blog post to justify coming.

I'll do it on the return plane because I still have my to do list when I get back...

Oh sure, you could travel to that great conference for work. Or don't and say you did!

**If This Then That** is a brilliant little web app for connecting services on the web.

It works as follows. If THIS happens. Then do THAT. For example I use it daily in work on the company blog. If a new post is published. Then it posts a link to the post on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Google+.

This week I asked the service to attend a two day conference in London on my behalf. Meanwhile I got on with my normal work. I then spent about an hour preparing a new blog post of the top takeaways from the event and sent it to the attendees and others who could not attend.

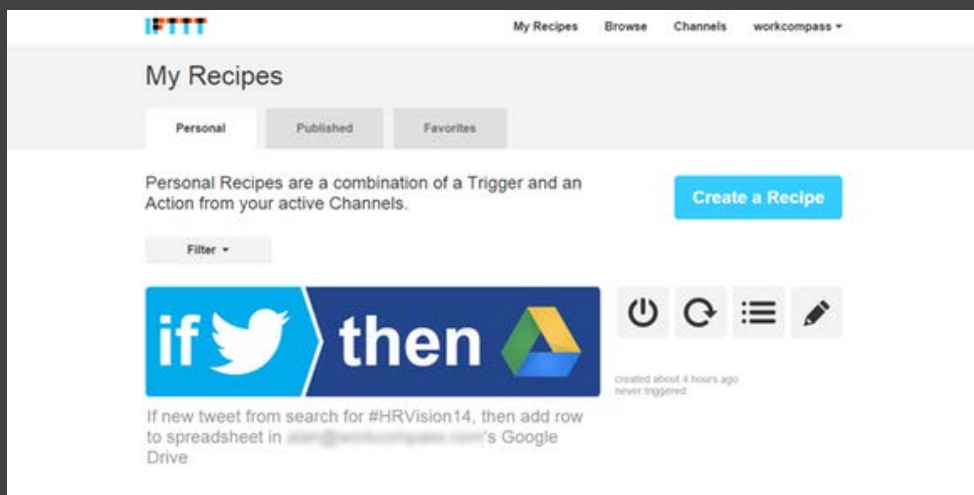
I got a handy list of people to follow and a good reason for them to follow me back.

Here is what I did:

Tracked down the twitter hashtag for the event. #HRVision

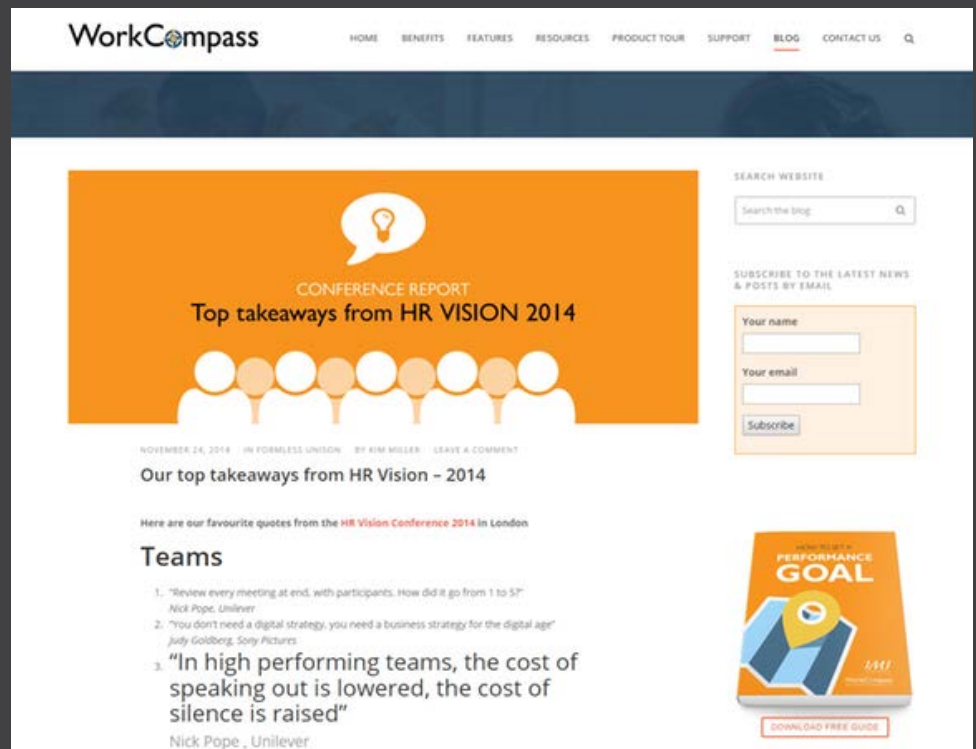
In IFTTT, I set up a new project and connected it with my Google Docs.

IF someone on twitter tweets with the hashtag #HRVision, then add it to a new row in a Google spreadsheet.



At the end of the conference open the spreadsheet and pull out the best quotes and insights to use in a [blog post](#). It will take you about an hour to do this and format it nicely so it is not a wall of text.

Then publish and start promoting your post. You will get extra traction if you can time this for just as the conference is ending and interest is at its highest.



That's it. Of course it will not work for all conferences as twitter usage varies across industries but if you are at CongRegation chances are good that you can use this.

The bad minded among you could view this as an opportunity to get time off work for a conference and stay at home for a breaking bad marathon. I will not tell you want to do but remember your original to-do list will still be there when you get back to your desk!!

Bonus tip: Republish the content in other ways. We did some [quote cards like this](#) to make them more sharable.



# The medium is very much the message... but ubiquitous communications technology opens a door for ideas and creativity.

## #49

By Pdraig McKeon



### Synopsis:

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We all wonder where the future development of communications is going, the extent to which it is pervasive and the effect that will have on the world. It is going where it was predicted to go 50 years ago when McLuhan espoused his 'the medium is the message'. He was ahead of his time. His theories that the medium of itself changes the world and that they are an extension of the person are acting out in front of us. For all though that we live in a new environment shaped by the media of this time original thought, creativity and 'the idea' will still differentiate.

### 4 Takeaways:

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1. McLuhan's concept that the 'medium is the message' was way ahead of its time.
2. The medium itself, by its mere presence, has an effect on the society around it, over and above the content it delivers.
3. We have to plan for a world where interactive digital communications is ubiquitous.
4. Original thought, creativity and the expression of emotion will again be the differentiators.

### About Pdraig McKeon:

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Pdraig McKeon is an hopelessly curious Sligoman based in Dublin who



30 years ago (!) as a newbie to communications in college, I was introduced to the concept of 'the medium is the message'. It was the catchphrase descriptor for the thinking of Canadian philosopher and academic Marshall McLuhan, one of

the first thought leaders in the emerging study of mass communications as we now know it.

His thinking – set out in *Understanding Media* (1964) – was that a medium affects the society in which it plays a role not only by the content delivered over the medium, but also by the characteristics of the medium itself – by the effect that it has on those in place to receive the content.

At the time television was the next great frontier. McLuhan however used the example of a light bulb to explain. He explained that while the bulb does not deliver content in the way a newspaper has articles or television does programmes, it is still a medium that has an effect on the society around it. By throwing off light, it allows people to create useable spaces at night when it would otherwise be dark. The light bulb he argued "creates an environment by its mere presence".

He was way ahead of his time. Had he lived to see digital communication as we know it (he died in 1980) he would have seen one of the core theories of his thinking on modern media evolving exactly as he set out.

His argument was that media technologies should be seen as "an extension of the physical, social, psychological, or intellectual function of humans". In the way that the light extends the room from darkness, so McLuhan figured the media extends our ability to engage the world around us. Television extends what we can see and hear; a computer extends our capacity to search and store knowledge. The electronic media, in general, he stated were "an extension of our central nervous system"

And so it has come to pass, perhaps eerily so for those that worry about their teenage childrens' obsession with WhatsApp and Snapchat. But if we accept that teenagers in every era will find a way to mutually obsess about things they will grow out of, we should focus on the environment that the underlying technology in those applications is creating "by its mere presence"

has been either studying or working in Communications since 1983.

He is currently acting Director of Alumni Relations at DCU and has his fingers in a range of other pies, paid and unpaid. If you buy him a cup of tea he will tell you more about that than you want to know.

### Contacting Padraig:

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You can follow Padraig on [Twitter](#), connect with him on [LinkedIn](#) or [email](#).

It's not the technology itself. Rather we should consider how we moderate a world that knows nothing other than the utility unquestionably and reliably offered by that technology – the world where the speed and ubiquity of connection, the default gathering and management of data and the capacity to access directly anybody who wants to be accessed will be taken as given.

The way society works will change - for example when economists now talk about the prospects of recovery in Ireland's consumer economy you wonder what that will look like, given that that today's 10 year old will never see 'shopping' or, more particularly, shops in our traditional understanding of them as the default place to fulfil their retail needs.

It all seems terrible utilitarian – more Orwell's 1984 than McLuhan's 1964 – and yet there I would argue is the ultimate opportunity. For all that that the application of technology to communications has changed the game 'by its sheer presence' we are already at, or can certainly foresee, a point where technically there are no insurmountable barriers to access for all.

When no one is doing anything different in technical terms, what will stand out is the idea. Creativity and emotion - the unpredictability of the individual – these are the elements that have always and will always make for successful communications.

The medium may be a message. It may effect a new context but within that context, it is not the technology that engages people – it is the idea. Let us not forget that opportunity and / or how to exploit it.

## Why Mobile is King. #50

By Adam Finan



### Synopsis:

2014 marked the first time in internet history that mobile device usage surpassed desktop. The money is in the list... the list is now mobile!

### 4 Takeaways:

1. You do not get to choose how and where your customers access your information, but you need to adapt and give them the best experience possible, however they choose to find you.
2. 98% of text messages are read. This is the most effective way to reach your audience.
3. Mobile is the most important factor going forward for marketers and business owners.
4. Failure to have a mobile strategy = money lost.

### About Adam Finan:

Adam Finan is the owner at [textyme-dia](#) where he helps businesses utilize the power of mobile marketing. World traveler turned entrepreneur, he created an online business from hammocks in Thailand by working as a seo consultant & freelance writer before returning to Ireland.

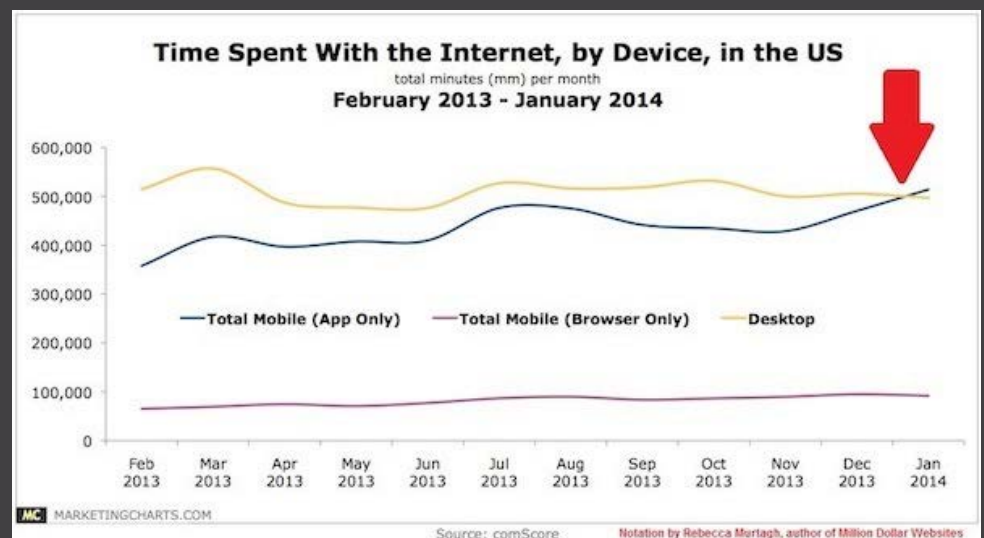
### Contacting Adam Finan:

You can follow Adam on [Twitter](#), connect with him on [Google+](#) or find out more on [TextyMedia](#).

Mobile is not a fad by any means. It is the progression of personal technology and failure in creating a mobile strategy is to throw away business.

Here are some amazing statistics that mobile marketing offers businesses today.

- 98% of text messages are read & 90% of these are within 3 minutes.
- CTR on text url is +35%
- Mobile coupons are 10x more likely to be redeemed than print
- 68% of all likes on Facebook are via mobile
- 70% of Facebook action is on mobile device
- 75% of Twitter usage is via mobile.
- 65% of Irish adults have a smartphone



Text Marketing is one of the most effective, direct and personal marketing methods available today. When a customer invites you into their personal space and allows you to send them updates & offers via sms, you know they want to hear from you! You do not get to choose how and where your customers access your information, but you need to adapt and give them the best experience possible, however they choose to find you.



## Mobile vs Social

The social media world is noisy and it can be hard to stand out as a small business. Facebook reach is dwindling somewhere between 1-3% right now. Many businesses are not happy about all the money and time they spent building pages only to now have to pay to reach those same people again.

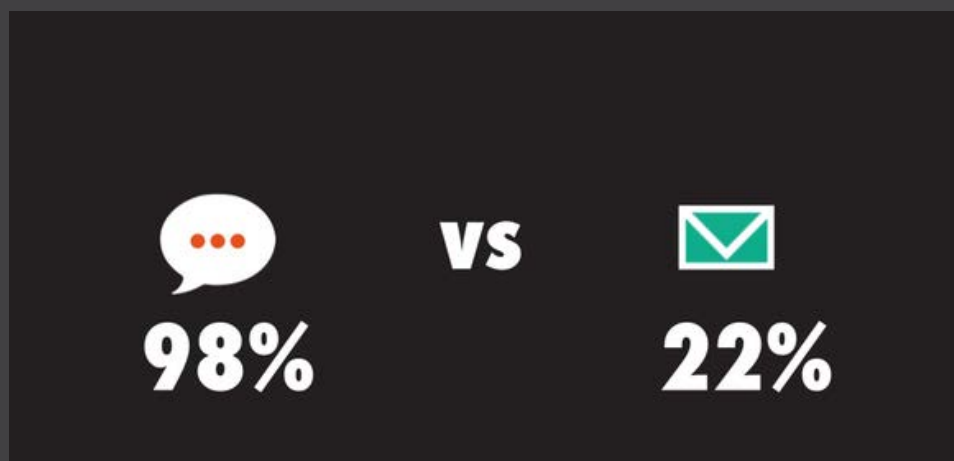
Unlike Facebook, Twitter shows you everything that people you follow posted. This means more noise! Average visibility of a tweet is less than 4% of your followers with engagement rates around the 1% mark for 99% of people. Even BuzzFeed only manages under 20%!

You need to tweet 20-30 times per week to reach 30% of your audience. Or you could build an sms list and reach your audience 98% of the time!

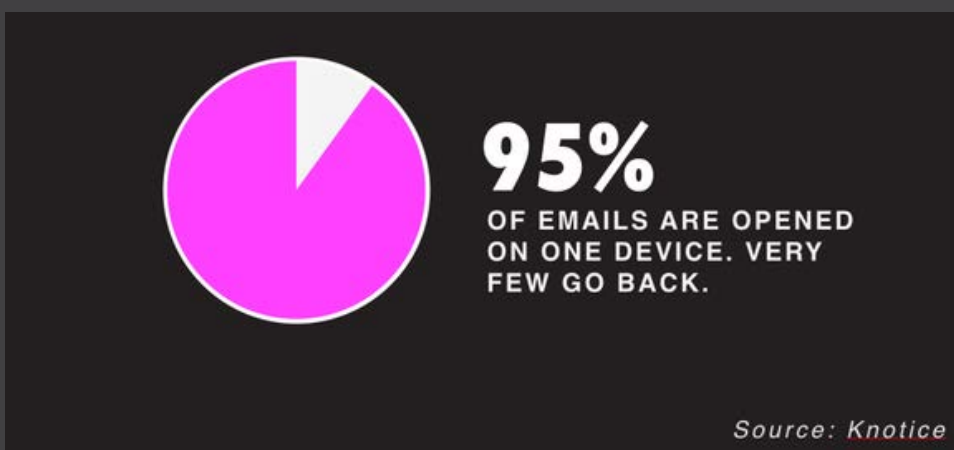
This is why moving forward, businesses need to consider options that allow them to own their own list and not succumb to changes in the marketplace like that again. Facebook is an excellent lead generation tool for mobile campaigns, as this is where your customers are already. But a page like is not enough moving into 2015.

## Mobile vs Email

- 98 % of texts are read vs 22% of emails.
- 62% of all email is first opened on a mobile device.



This gets even lower for emails in certain sectors. Email is flooded with spam. Every day some new person seems to be emailing businesses with useless content via email. Most people just mass delete unless you copyrighting REALLY sticks out amongst the crowd.



Make sure your email is mobile friendly and all outgoing links are to mobile optimized websites!

So lets embrace all that mobile has offered us and create solid mobile marketing strategies for 2015.

Short checklist:

- Is your website mobile friendly?
- Is it responsive or dedicated? Which is right for your business?..
- If you are considering an app, did you know that 99% of apps are downloaded and used once?
- Is the payment process seamless and easy?
- Do you have a mobile marketing strategy?
- Could you be using mobile better in your business?
- Where did I get my stats?

Google, Econsultancy, Knotice, Techcrunch, Techipedia, eMarketer.

# Growing you presence online, some tips, failures and stories.

## #51

By Simon Cocking



### Synopsis:

Growing you presence online, some tips, failures and stories.

With some episodes of epic failures along the way too, and an egg in the radiator to get us to Cong.

### 4 Takeaways:

1. Face to face is still important.
2. There are many social media outlets, chose a few and focus on the quality of your content.
3. Have time off line too.
4. Ireland is big, it's worth getting out and about.

### About Simon Cocking:

Dublin based, creative digital marketer, blogger, writer, and serial experimenter.

### Contacting Simon Cocking:

You can contact Simon on [Twitter \(personal\)](#), [Twitter \(Life\)](#) and [Twitter \(work\)](#). You can also read his thoughts in [his blog](#). You can also find Simon on [Irish Tech News](#) and [Tweakyourbiz](#).



With some episodes of epic failures along the way too, and an egg in the radiator to get us to Cong.



The Irish Social Media community is vibrant and thriving. I was really excited to hear about the CongRegation Social Media Gathering 2014, with apologies for my ignorance about not knowing about it before one of my social media mentors @jasonroe told me about it.

Until January of this year I had a minimal to zero online presence. This was fine, I used to joke I had my blog, it was just an offline one, my diary. Yeah, I know, not a very funny joke. Then, like a butterfly ready to emerge I blitzed it. 240 + blog posts later, I learned an awful lot.

But Congregation is going to be full of social media experts!!!

I know.

I imagine the gurus are bristling and saying 'who does he think he is!?'

And it's true. Buuuuut.... Pre-digital, pre social media, I did build and grow a couple of [companies](#) and a sport now played nationally across the [country](#). So I figure between a mixture of my own experience of hustle, and the scathing ripostes of contemporary

Irish social media gurus it should make for an interesting conversation for the audience.



Eaten by the lions

My plan, is to put out the limited lessons I've learnt and then get torn to pieces by these higher beings. Currently it's something I've been teaching to my fellow students on the UCD Innovation Academy course in Dublin. The feedback has been good. Some stuff they already 'know', but

lots they don't, or are not actually doing.

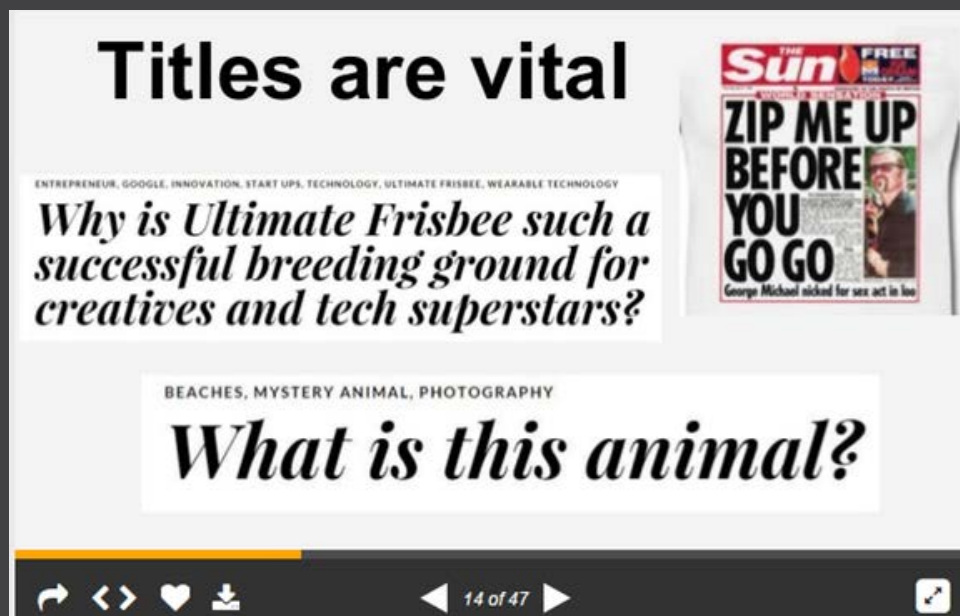


Strategies to get more traffic online 3rd version, 95% of Images from Simon Cocking

This is the [slideshare](#) I won't be presenting at Congregate. One, unsecret to improving your social media profile and impact, is to get out there and do it. Tools emerge and new platforms emerge, but they are all learnable. You just have to get your hands dirty.



Here are some screen shots from it that I won't show, unless you really really want me to.



We don't want to be writing clickbait, but we still need catchy titles.



The wisdom of the crowds or plunging to the lowest common denominator?

I'm hopeful that we will come away wiser for exchanging our experiences about what has worked and what hasn't. I'm guessing that if we didn't think this way then we would have stayed at home tweeting by ourselves.

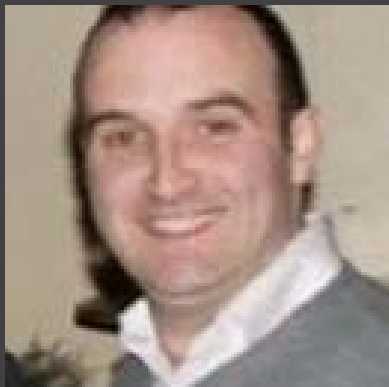
It's great to come to Cong, because ... we don't do enough road trips in Ireland



Congregate is also a great idea because we don't get out and about as often as we should or could. Hopefully we'll bring everyone home again too.

## The Wordpress Song. #52

By John Heffernan



### Synopsis:

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Most of what I wanted to write about was covered already by other posters so I thought I would lighten the mood. Enjoy.

### 4 Takeaways:

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1. Don't take yourself too seriously on social media.
2. Apologies to all trademark holders- this is a parody.
3. Written as a bit of fun and no social media advice can be inferred.
4. Running out of takeaways....

### About John Heffernan:

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John Heffernan is an IT trainer, former teacher, former lecturer, former software tester, former blogger ( seeing a trend here...), early Social Media adopter, innovative educator, educational technology consultant and Digital Humanities/history geek.

### Contacting John Heffernan:

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You can follow John on [Twitter](#) and you can find out more about him on [About.Me](#).



(inspired by the Sunscreen Song by Baz Lurhman and Mary Schmich article)

Ladies and gentlemen of the Congregation of '14

Use Wordpress

If I could offer you only one tip for the future, Wordpress would be it

The long-term benefits of Wordpress have been proved by SEO's

Whereas the rest of my advice has no basis more reliable

Than my own meandering experience, I will dispense this advice now

Enjoy the power and beauty of your blogging, oh, never mind

You will not understand the power of blogging until you found twitter

but trust me, in 2 years, you'll look back

At photos of yourself and recall in a way you can't grasp now why you put them up on instagram

You are not as popular as you imagine.

Don't worry about the RSS feed

Or know that worrying is as effective as trying to get off Uber.

The real troubles in your social media life are apt to be things that never downloaded properly on your Nokia phone or

the kind that blindsides you at the Websummit early on Tuesday

Delete one app every day that scares you

Don't be reckless with comments on other people's blogs

Don't put up with people who are reckless on yours.

Whatapp.

Don't waste your time on Bebo

Sometimes you're friended, sometimes you're poked

Your blog is long and in the end, you can crosspost to Facebook

Integrate Google apps to your Wordpress blog if you succeed in doing this, tell me how

Fav kind tweets, Block hideous trolls

Podcast

Accept certain inalienable truths

Browsers will crash, ipods will install music, U2 will get old

And when you do, you'll remember that when you were a noob

Tariff plans were horrendous, broadband was slow

And children got the handme downs.

Respect quiet carriages on trains.

Don't mess too much with themes

Or install too many plugins, think of your users.

But trust me on Wordpress.

# Social Media as a Weapon in the Russian/Ukrainian Conflict

## #53

By Ruairi Kavanagh



### Synopsis:

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A New Kind of Weapon in a New Kind of War.

### 4 Takeaways:

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1. Social Media is not just dominated by Facebook and Twitter; platforms like vKontakte, Odnoklassniki and Weibu are market leaders in massive territories.
2. Traditional media is subject to scrutiny and sanction-could social media be open to same.
3. The end of social media as soft power? With the increasing use of SM by political groups as a means of exposing graphic content, does social media act as an unwelcome conduit by which extremist views can be further expounded.
4. Mass conquers message: with enough shares, views and likes-the veracity of the original message is lost.

### About Ruairi Kavanagh:

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Ruairi Kavanagh is a journalist, author and media relations specialist, with particular previous experience in relation to military and law enforcement, public affairs and the medical/emergency response sectors. Currently he is editor of gradireland.com and the gradireland range of print products. The undisputed leader in terms of graduate information and advice, gradireland.com has over 120,000 registered users and on average, has over 5.5 million page views per year. In addition, gradireland also run sector

### A New Kind of Weapon in a New Kind of War:

Meet Ruslan Semenov, a dentist hard at work in the restive region of Russia's North Caucasus. Meanwhile 1560 kilometres away in the eastern Ukrainian City of Odessa, meet "Dr Igor Rozovski" a doctor in the city's hospital. During the summer, amidst fighting in the city between pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian factions, more than 50 people were killed in a fire after a local Government building was occupied by pro-Russian forces.

This prompted 'Dr Rozovski' to post the following (unedited and translated from Russian) on his Facebook page:

"Hello. My name is Igor Rosovski. I am 39 years old. I live in the city of Odessa. In the course of 15 years I have worked as a first-aid physician. Yesterday, as you know, there was a terrible tragedy in our city, some people killed other people. They killed in a brutal way by burning alive, not in a drunken stupor, not to get their grandmother's inheritance, but because they share the political views of nationalists. First they brutally beat their victims, then burned them alive. As a doctor, I rushed to help those whom I could save, but the fighters stopped me. They didn't let me go to the wounded. One rudely pushed me, promising that I and other Jews would suffer a similar fate. I saw a young man I could have saved if I could have taken him to the hospital, but my attempts to persuade were met with a blow to the face and lost glasses. In fifteen years I have seen much, but yesterday I wanted to cry, not from the blows and humiliation, but from my helplessness to do something. In my city such things did not happen even during the worst of Nazi occupation. I wonder why the world is silent."

But there is no Dr Igor Rozovski, in fact his Facebook profile picture, when exposed by [Radio Free Europe](#), showed it to be none other than a picture of Ruslan Semenov, the Dentist from the North Caucasus. Until this was discovered of course, this tragic take of death and barbarism in eastern Ukraine almost perfectly fit the narrative of Nazi, right-win thugs marauding through the eastern region of Ukraine, searching for innocent victims. Mr Semenov had a website for his clinic, the Ust Dzhegmiska Dental Clinic, but the site has since been taken down, soon after this story of 'what happens when social media propaganda goes wrong' went across the internet. Also, less surprisingly, the profile of 'Dr Igor Rosovski' has also vanished from Facebook.

Social media, just one more propaganda weapon in the increasingly violent, tragic and divisive war in Ukraine, the first conflict on mainland Europe in the 21st Century.

### The 'disinformation' battleground

Since the overthrow of former President Viktor Yanukovich, following his decision to row back on a treaty which would have seen Kiev's Government break away from Moscow and move toward a pro-EU path, Ukraine has been in flames. Yanukovich's move enraged both Moscow and Ukraine's very sizeable Russian speaking population. He fled in late Spring following massive protests and violence in the capital's Maidan Square, which became known as the Maidan Movement. The pro-Russian peninsula of Crimea was not so subtly annexed by Russia in April after a 'referendum' and following this, other areas of Eastern Ukraine began to agitate for repatriation to the 'motherland'. The ongoing crisis has seen almost half a million displaced, almost 4,000 dead and

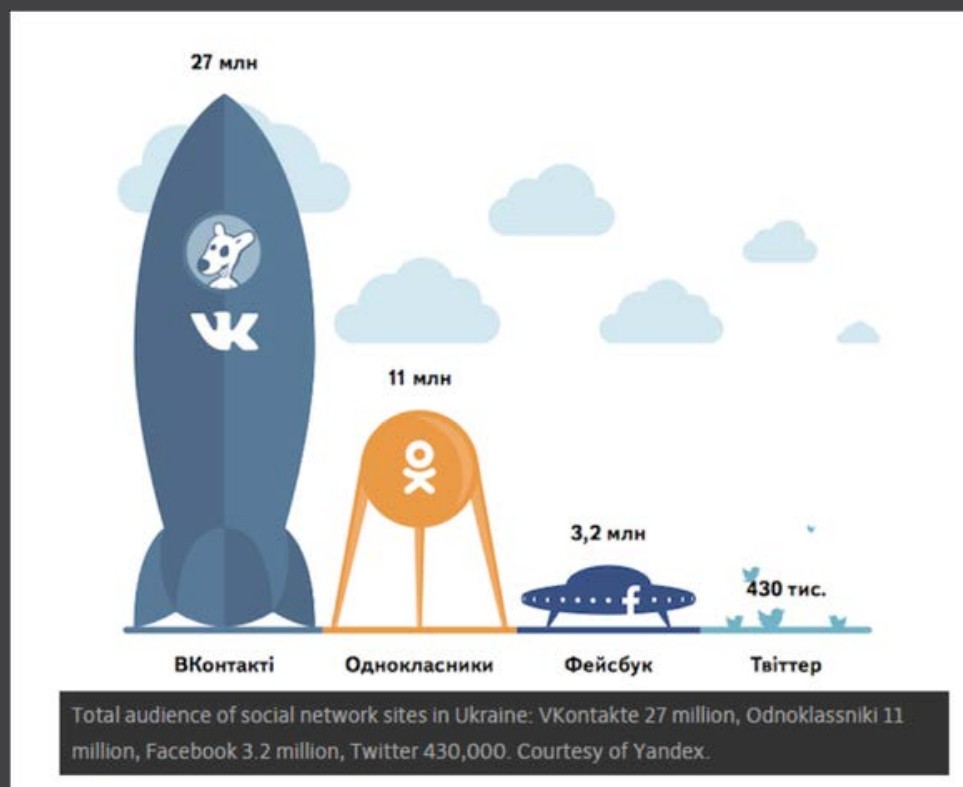
leading events and competitions, such as the National Student Challenge, which combines online psychometric testing with a live-event for finalists.

### Contacting Ruairi Kavanagh:

You can follow [Ruairi on the Grad Ireland main Website](#), Grad Ireland [Competition site](#) or their Blog. You can like their [Facebook](#) page or follow them on [Twitter](#). You can also [email Ruairi](#).

nearly 9,000 injured.

It's also seen a massive campaign of 'disinformation' on traditional media and social media that has been widespread in terms of tactics employed, sometimes slapdash in execution but very effective in terms of gaining critical mass. The major platforms in Ukraine are vKontakte, Odnoklassniki and to a lesser extent, Facebook. The first two are the most popular Russian social media platforms with 27 million and 11 million users respectively. In comparison, Facebook has 3.2 million and Twitter only 430,000. That said, these figures are presented by Yandex.ru, the most popular Russian website, so the veracity of the figures could be called into question.



The tactics of the media campaign to discredit and attack the pro-Kiev Government have been spearheaded by often brazen support by mainstream Russian Media. For instance, check out the multiple personalities which Mr Andrei Petkov was given by [three Russian new channels](#) on the same day.

Seek and destroy (any message that is not your message)

In March this year, as Moscow vehemently denied that the unmarked green uniforms that swept into the peninsula were Russian troops, a Colonel of the Irish Defence Forces was on the Crimean border, facing these unmasked combatants, with a mission Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). No sooner, had the below image appeared online, then both the Irish Independent and the Defence Forces Ireland Twitter account were subjected to a considerable increase in comments and tweets, the vast majority of a pro-Russian nature. Indeed the Colonel told me he was called a "fascist" both to his face on the ground near Crimea and there were also online comments of a similar nature as his Irish insignia was mistaken for an Italian flag, hence the vague Mussolini connotations.



Comment is Free (Actually maybe not)

**The Guardian Newspaper** earlier this year said that they believed that there was an orchestrated pro-Kremlin campaign by hired 'trollers' to comment and agitate on stories related to Ukraine.

The following stories had the following number of comments deleted for reasons of abuse in April this year alone:

- 171 comments listed, real figure: 244 (74 removed)
- 2,149 listed, real figure: 2,310 (161 removed)
- 2,004 listed, real figure 2,263 (259 removed)

The use of disinformation, by both sides, but predominantly Russia should not be seen as anything new, it's simply another weapon in the age old propaganda war. The overtness and aggression of it on social media platforms, which traditionally in their relatively short life spans are seen as soft-power mediums, is what makes it stand out and take its place as another weapon in the age of hybrid warfare. Combining these elements with the considerable threat of Russian 'hard' power, in addition to the use of foreign fighters, non-government actors and the civilian population itself, Europe has been introduced to a very 'modern' war.

# Who Remembers the 22A? Nostalgia Rocks in Hyperlocal Land.

## #54

By Pauline Sargent



### Synopsis:

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Over the last few years, Ireland is seeing a growth in hyperlocal websites that provide local communities with various forms of hyperlocal content. They can be found on purpose built websites and on social platforms such as Facebook. The content on these sites is varied from news, views, events, local sport stories to regular updates on residents and parish council meetings. This article will look at why these sites matter. How nostalgia rocks in hyperlocal land. And what responsibility do we have to preserve the content of these sites for social history and future generations.

### 4 Takeaways:

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1. Hyperlocal in Ireland
2. Nostalgia Rocks
3. Digital Archiving
4. Social & Local Matters

### About Pauline Sargent:

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Pauline is a DigiWoman. A Social Entrepreneur. A business woman. She has two gorgeous boys. For her honeymoon she climbed Mount Kilimanjaro. She loves living life locally. Red skittles are her favourite sweets. She sailed around the Caribbean for a year. She's a community activist.

Instagram is her social online home. Taking photos is her passion. She jumped from a plane at 12,000 feet and will never do it again.

By Pauline Sargent:

### Hyperlocal Ireland

A report in 2012 by Damian Radcliffe on hyperlocal activity in the UK defined hyperlocal media as "online news or content services pertaining to a town, village, single postcode or other small, geographically defined community"

Over the last few years, Ireland is seeing a growth in hyperlocal websites that provide local communities with various forms of hyperlocal content. They can be found on purpose built websites and on social platforms such as Facebook. The content on these sites is varied from news, views, events, local sport stories to regular updates on residents and parish council meetings.

The Hyperlocal landscape in Ireland has yet to be mapped so Irish data is sparse on volume and usage of hyperlocal media in Ireland. It is estimated that Ireland has roughly 20 active hyperlocal websites. These hyperlocal media websites are run mainly by local people with a huge amount of passion and interest for their local areas. And most are doing it on a voluntary basis.

A Kilcullen Diary and Ballyboughal.net are great examples of hyperlocal sites in Ireland. The Kilcullen Dairy has been going since 2005 and the Ballyboughal site since 2008.

The area covered by hyperlocal websites is generally much smaller than a standard newspaper or broadcast region. The characteristics and content of each hyperlocal service is dependent on the need of the local community being served.

Some have grown out of the need to hold local authority to account others to define local identity and express democracy in innovative ways. Drimnagh'sGood.com is one such site that was set up to provide Drimnagh with a strong on-line voice and to talk Drimnagh up rather than down.

The main driver of these hyperlocal sites is the easy access to online publishing tools such as Wordpress, Audioboo, YouTube and Facebook. People are embracing social media tools and are able to access local content that matters to them in real time.

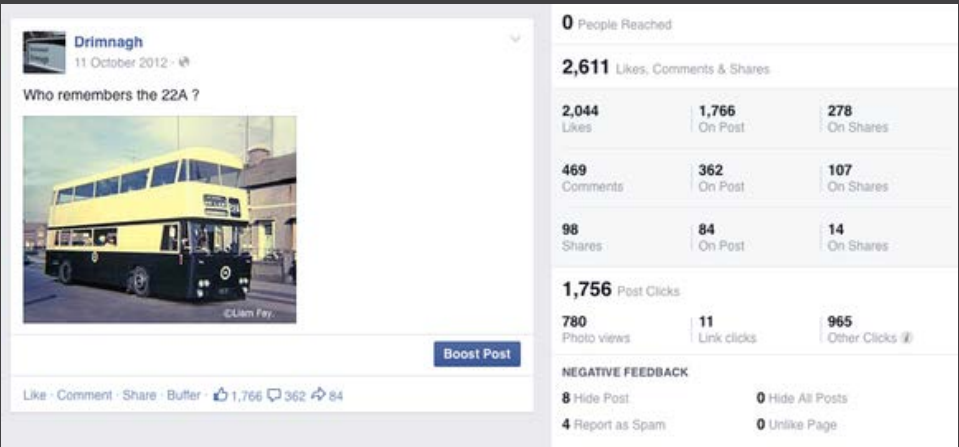
Most hyperlocal sites that are doing well, don't simply broadcast information, they engage in a two-way dialogue with their community.

### Nostalgia Rocks

A simple question was asked on the Drimnagh Facebook page a couple of years back 'Who remembers the 22a? And with it an image of the bus that went from Drimnagh to Cabra and back every day?'

Contacting Pauline Sargent:

You can follow Pauline on [Twitter](#).



The response was immediate, positive, funny and most of all nostalgic. People were immediately taken back to their younger days, remembering family, old friends and neighbours. They talked about what that bus meant to them and the different journeys they took on it. A lot of people recalled shouting to the bus conductor “Gives us a ticket roll” as a kid in the hope he’d throw one out for you to catch.

The above post received over 1700 likes, (only 1200 liked the page back then) 362 comments and 84 shares. At the time it was a real eye opener as to what drives people to interact and talk with each other online.

Where do you come from? Is a common question asked in Ireland as soon as you meet someone for the first time. We immediately want to get a handle on where they are from and whom we might know that they know.

A sense of place is important for a lot of people. It is still a strong marker of identity and central to people’s knowledge and understanding of themselves and others. Local knowledge matters. And with the decline of local print papers servicing local areas online hyperlocal sites will matter more and more.

Here is a sample of some hyper local site in Ireland that have a Facebook presence, some in fact do not have a hyperlocal website and use Facebook only. There are obviously pros and cons to doing the latter.

Hyperlocal

Facebook Page	Likes	Hyperlocal Facebook URL
<a href="#">Tallaght</a>	13,827	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Tallaght.Ireland">https://www.facebook.com/Tallaght.Ireland</a>
<a href="#">Crumlin</a>	6739	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/pages/Crumlin/107304959300168?fref=ts">https://www.facebook.com/pages/Crumlin/107304959300168?fref=ts</a>
<a href="#">Drimnagh</a>	2190	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Drimnagh">https://www.facebook.com/Drimnagh</a>
<a href="#">Lucan</a>	4568	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/LucanLife/timeline">https://www.facebook.com/LucanLife/timeline</a>
<a href="#">Our Kilcock</a>	1819	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/kilcock">https://www.facebook.com/kilcock</a>
<a href="#">Greenhills</a>	1962	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/pages/Greenhills-Dublin/435386946512252?fref=ts">https://www.facebook.com/pages/Greenhills-Dublin/435386946512252?fref=ts</a>
<a href="#">Ballyboughal</a>	462	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Ballyboughal">https://www.facebook.com/Ballyboughal</a>

Overtime I have been thinking more and more about the stories collected on these hyperlocal sites. And what can be done to store the information collected in real-time on the various social platforms and websites. Do hyperlocal publishers, creators and curators have a responsibility for preserving the information and making it accessible for future generations.

When our grandchildren want to look back at how their grandparents lived in Drimnagh in 2014. What will they be able to find? Will they be able to trace their relatives and see what they were doing and thinking at a given point in their lives.

Will comments such as the one below matter?

Martin "my gran aunt lived in 238 Moran road just across from the school use to visit her every Monday night she gave me sandwiches that you wouldn't give to an elephant god bless her she didn't have very much money but always wanted to share ... Loved her"

Hyperlocal publishers need to consider digital archiving. And questions such as what content is valuable and what process is used for selecting the information that needs to be preserve for future generations.

I wonder who are the target audiences and stakeholders that may be interested in helping to develop processes for the preservation of hyperlocal sites.

So much can be gained and learnt from social media platforms about the experiences of ordinary people and I am sure the historians in the future will be looking back and wishing we had done more to document aspects of our lives better. Particularly, when we have so many tools to gather the information.

Hyperlocal sites are a natural collection point to capture the social history of an area and will allow the historians of the future to study the experiences of ordinary people and their everyday lives.

I'll leave you with this memory about the number 22A bus it's what hyperlocal is all about. Social and local.

"Yes I remember it. I used to take from The Quays to Inchicore Railworks every morning when I worked there as an apprentice. I walked from Glasnevin to the Quays first...6 am.....very dark and cold.....to keep me company I used to sing Van Morrisons song ...On the Bright Side of the Road. I can still smell the hops coming up from Guinness ..... very pungent smell. 22A was not very frequent.....but when they came they were like bananas...came in twos and three".

## Engagement? Don't make me Laugh...#55

By Karl Richardson



### Synopsis:

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Engagement. It's one of those buzzwords which are thrown about with willful abandon. As social media was embraced as a reasonably cost effective method of starting the sales process, engagement was measured in likes and follows. But finding real engagement and that transition from a simple call-to-action to actually committing someone to physically do something for nothing is pure, measurable gold. So how do you get people to flock to your message through social platforms? You certainly don't ask them to do something that you would not do yourself, so creating an example and narrative to encourage that action is vital.

### 4 Takeaways:

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1. Measurement of social media should not fall back to the 'column inches' approach.
2. Engagement is different for brands and organisations but perhaps it needs to be more clearly defined.
3. To pull in that engagement, the narrative has to be strong enough to gain attention.
4. The call to action has to be worthwhile and simple.

### About Karl Richardson:

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Currently Head of Communications & Marketing for Rehab. Used to head up communications & media for Irish Rugby (Yes I have a Grand Slam medal and no, I don't know what went wrong

If I were to ask you to follow a brand or product on one of your social platforms would you do it? If there was a chance to win something, you probably would, even if it meant opening yourself up to being bombarded with offers and updates from that brand in the future.

The question I want to ask is this: Is this actually how we want to measure engagement through social media? Is this person buying into the brand and all of its values? Let's say it is not a brand or product knocking on your social platform door and rather it is a voluntary organization campaigning for a specific cause. Are likes and follows a good indicator that that particular issue they are canvassing support for is really engaging with the general public or their target audience to create change?

Different brands, products and organisations will measure social media engagement in different ways, but sometimes, just sometimes I feel it is a little bit like the old PR practice of valuing column inches and media coverage and putting a monetary figure on it. This coverage from local and national newspapers are still put out to research to see if it resonates with the public and if their feedback support the brands messages and values.

Actually getting people to do something is the only true indicator of engagement, especially in social media. If you are a brand, getting someone to sign up for a special event and ACTUALLY turning up for it is real engagement. Who knows, if they come to the event, they may actually taste or test that brand and in the future, actually buy it. Now that is real engagement that you can put a value on.

But this is rare and to get real buy in through social media, you need to create a narrative (in 140 characters!) that hooks them in and an action to follow that is simple and easy. Charities tend to have an affinity for this.

The greatest story that they can tell is that of the people that they are there to assist.

The People of the Year Awards are run every year and televised on RTE (early disclaimer here, I am involved in them, but I think they are a good example of what I am trying to say).

Everyday heroes and well known people are honoured for their achievements. They have been going 40 years and the greatest challenge is always searching for nominations, which all come from the general public. In reality, the Awards show itself is just there to facilitate the public's views. The stories that it produces are nothing short of inspiring.

Traditionally the nominations were driven through PR (to grab the general public's attention), local authorities and representative bodies.

Nominations were either phoned in or sent via snail mail, which was a laborious process for all involved.

The strategy over the past two years was to try and drive digital interaction through social media to encourage and harvest nominations, with a target of 30% for nominations to come from social platforms.

during the 2007 World Cup). General media, politics and tech junky.

### Contacting Karl Richardson:

To do that, the stories of past winners needed to be front and centre to remind people of not only what the Awards represent, but also remind them of somebody who they may think has done something as inspirational or worthy of an Award. Previous winners like Mark Pollock, Christina Noble and Brian O'Driscoll all evoke different emotions for what they have achieved.

Their stories were delivered with the simple call to action: Follow this link to nominate someone who has inspired you!

Of course there were the promoted posts, advertising and content calendars to go along with this, but the point really was that a story was produced, it was pure in its intentions, an action was asked for and people reacted to create that real engagement. The embodiment of that engagement will be standing in front of a prime time television audience accepting an award next Saturday evening.

A good example of engagement? I will leave it up to a huddle to decide that this weekend.

## Does Anybody Care About Your Content? #56

By Helen Cousins



### Synopsis:

If someone has an interest in technical content on the internet, then they will read and share an informative post, regardless of topic. It's a myth that blog posts have to follow a formula to be relevant or popular. Write what you know about, and write a post that is as long as it needs to be.

### 4 Takeaways:

1. All topics are fair game for a blog post, no matter how prosaic
2. You shouldn't follow a formula to write a good blog post
3. People do read long and technical content on the internet, if the topic is of interest to them
4. Eoin Kennedy is the most persistent man in Ireland. Hire him to get stuff done

(He didn't pay me to say that, but I'm hoping for the best biscuits if I ever get to Cong.)

### About Helen Cousins

Helen Cousins is a Corporate Finance advisor who assists technology companies to raise finance. She's a chartered accountant by profession and loves gadgets and tech. She blogs and can also be found lurking on [Twitter](#).

### Contacting Helen Cousins

You can follow Helen on [Twitter](#), connect with her through [LinkedIn](#), visit her [website](#) or [email](#) her.

I was given the title, and I knew I could do it, but would anybody care enough to read it? It was a catchy title, but a pretty dry topic; "Common Accounting Mistakes That Can Cause Serious Trouble." Even if folk started to read it, would they lose the will to live by the end of it?

### Does Anybody Care about Accounting Mistakes?

I've spent 30 years finding and sorting out accounting mistakes, (sigh), so by the 10,000 hours rule, I'm an expert in that field at least. Sorting out accounting mistakes is a small by-product of what I really do, (raising equity finance for tech companies). I do stuff in the course of securing a finance deal for clients that you can't learn about from a blog post, but the fact is nobody cares about the complicated things, until it's too late. The devil is in the detail. The accounts and any accounting mistakes therein are often seen as trivial issues by company founders, seen as being only talked about by pen pushing, pedantic bean counters. But investors view it differently. The accounts have to show a 'true and fair view' and accounting mistakes can result in a reduction in a company's valuation or even a deal being pulled.

There have been a number of high profile occurrences of accounting error this year, which resulted in the resignation of a CFO and a huge drop in the value of the company concerned. These include [Hertz](#) (\$43 million), [American Realty Capital Properties](#) (\$22 million in just 6 months) and [Tesco](#) (a whopping €320m.)

Would anybody read a post about accounting mistakes? I decided to give it a go.

### A Blog Post is as Long as it Needs to Be

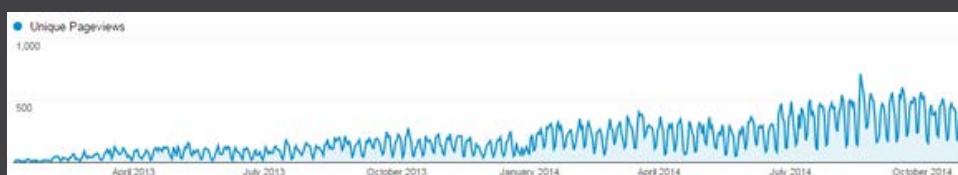
I jotted down about 25 headings on the back of an envelope and fired up some voice recognition software. I started to dictate and after about 3 hours, I had 3,000 words written covering the implications of 15 common accounting mistakes. There is a belief amongst some bloggers that a blog post should be 500 – 600 words long, presumably based upon the presumption that modern man has the attention span of a rhesus monkey. But this simply isn't true. If you are not writing a post just for the sake of it, (Top 10 Ways to Tell If Your Cat is Sad), but let the post be as long as it needs to be, then it's the right length. If someone needs the information, and the content is clear and informative, then they will read it. Nonetheless, for practical reasons, I concluded the post at that – 3,000 words. This post was a bit unique in that I didn't have to do any research, it was all ingrained in my head and after 30 years of working through it, I could just say it out loud with barely a pause.

It was published in January 2013 and now 21 months later, hazard a guess as to how many unique readers the post has had?

- a) 1,500
- b) 15,000, or
- c) 150,000+

As you will have guessed, it's closest to c). The post has been seen by 154,860 people to

date with the vast majority of this traffic (151,445) coming via Google. This post ranks globally for a number of searches related to accounting mistakes. On average, people have spent 15:18 minutes viewing the post. I have just read it through in a much faster time of 5:18 minutes, which shows that other people are either really reading the post right through in that 15 minutes, or just focusing in depth on the parts that interest them.



The post in question, about accounting errors, was a guest post on the [TweakYourBiz](#) a business blogging site, so many thanks to [Niall Devitt](#) for providing the readership data.

### The Snowball Effect

As you will see from Figure 1, over time the monthly unique views are increasing. The post is gaining authority and ranking well globally over time, which has had a snowball effect. So, even though it's an old post, the traffic is continuing to grow.

### Was it Just A Fluke?

No. Another post of mine which deals with an accounting technicality has also become an [evergreen](#) post. [“Why SaaS Revenue is Different”](#) has been seen by 32,576 people in the last 2 years with traffic coming both via Google and direct. It's increasing by about 750 unique views per month. On average, people have spent 18:28 minutes viewing the post, so again, it is being thoroughly read. It's being passed around via email, (dark social), presumably by people who have an interest in understanding the accounting treatment of SaaS revenues.

The SaaS Revenue post, at about 900 words, is much shorter than the accounting errors one which has about 3,000 words. SaaS Revenue is a niche topic and it only affects some tech companies. So although it is only one third the length of the other post, people spend more time reading it, on average 3 minutes more. This is probably explained by the fact that:

- a) it is an article that deals with a technical issue in more depth than the accounting mistakes post, and
- b) it only deals with one single issue, so it is probably being read in its entirety.

### People Actually Read Technical Content on the Internet

I thought it unlikely that a blog about accounting errors would be a popular post. I was wrong. If somebody has a need to know something, however 'dry' that topic may appear to others, if a post 'nails it', they will read and share it with others.

[“Common Accounting Mistakes That Can Cause Serious Trouble”](#) remains the most widely read post I have ever written. (I have written lots of posts that have had mundane readership too, but let's not go there!)

Like [Mary Carty](#), I'm tired of quick fixes and lazy content. There is no need to stick to a formula to write material that is relevant within your niche. If you want to stand out from the crowd, don't follow a template approach but instead write about your topic in the depth that it merits.

### Ho Ho Cong

Once again, I'm not going to make it to Cong for the Congregation. However, if you ever need a man to get things done, a man of Herculean persistence, Eoin Kennedy is your man. When it became clear at the end of October that I wouldn't be in Cong, Eoin ramped up his campaign to get a blog out of me. 23 cryptic, amusing, wheedling emails and several tweets later, it is written

## A Thawing Embrace - Irish Social Media's Lost World #57

By Jimmy Healy



### Synopsis:

Like a mammoth trapped in the ice, the construction industry was frozen at just the wrong time. It went into steep decline just as social media started becoming a key part of the corporate marketing mix. The result was that there is very little social media penetration in the Irish construction industry. However as the industry is now starting to recover and is expected to undergo considerable growth in the coming years, it will be fascinating to see how the industry increases its adoption of social media and how the practice will evolve in the sector. Will the sector evolve to more nuanced practices quickly?

### 4 Takeaways:

1. Construction sector is a huge portion of the Irish economy but it collapsed just as social media was becoming a major part of the marketing mix.
2. As a result the use of social media is underdeveloped in the sector.
3. The industry has recently to see an increase in activity and is set for significant growth over the coming years. This will allow it to start adopting social media as an important communications and marketing tool for their businesses.
4. The question is whether the sector will embrace evolved social media practices.

### About Jimmy Healy:

Jimmy Healy: Head of Communications and Marketing with the Con-



Back in May 2013, an amazing discovery was made in Siberia. Scientists discovered the body of a woolly mammoth, with perfectly preserved blood and muscle tissue. Even some of the hair was intact, despite the mammoth being 39,000 years old.

This discovery really excited the scientists. It was the first time they could study blood and blood flow in an animal that has been extinct for thousands of years.

All this illustrates the amazing preservative effect of freezing. Hitting pause at just the right moment gives a great opportunity for further study and analysis. Moments that were thought to be long past can be reassessed and new insights can be gained.

So what has this to do with social media? Well given the number of social media connoisseurs and scientists attending CongRegation, I would imagine there would be some interest in finding the social media equivalent of a frozen mammoth. Perhaps some form of endangered creature that had been stuck in time and which had remained relatively untouched by the passage of outside trends and developments.

Well I'm here to tell you such a social media 'Land that Time Forgot' does exist – the Irish construction industry.

It's important to remember that before the recession induced Ice Age, the Irish construction industry was one of the major beasts in the Irish economic landscape. It accounted for about 23% of the country's GDP and was valued at €38.6 billion. More than 273,000 people were directly employed in the sector.



struction Industry Federation (CIF). Formerly with the Fianna Fail Press Office and international public relations agency FD (now known as FTI Consulting). Keen interest in current affairs and digital marketing - as well as being a long suffering Liverpool fan. Currently undertaking a Masters in Digital Marketing with the Digital Marketing Institute.

### Contacting Jimmy Healy:

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You can follow Jimmy on [Twitter](#), connect with him on [LinkedIn](#) or by [email](#).

Then the harsh circumstances of the downturn hit in 2008. Practically overnight the industry was subjected to sub zero conditions. There was rapid business climate change across the whole sector.

The impact was massive. Over the coming years approximately 250,000 jobs (when you include indirect and affiliated jobs) were lost because of the collapse in the sector. The value of the industry fell from €38 billion to under €8 billion. There was hardly any construction activity. It wasn't long before the sector accounted for the largest number of company insolvencies and represented one in four of the people on the dole.

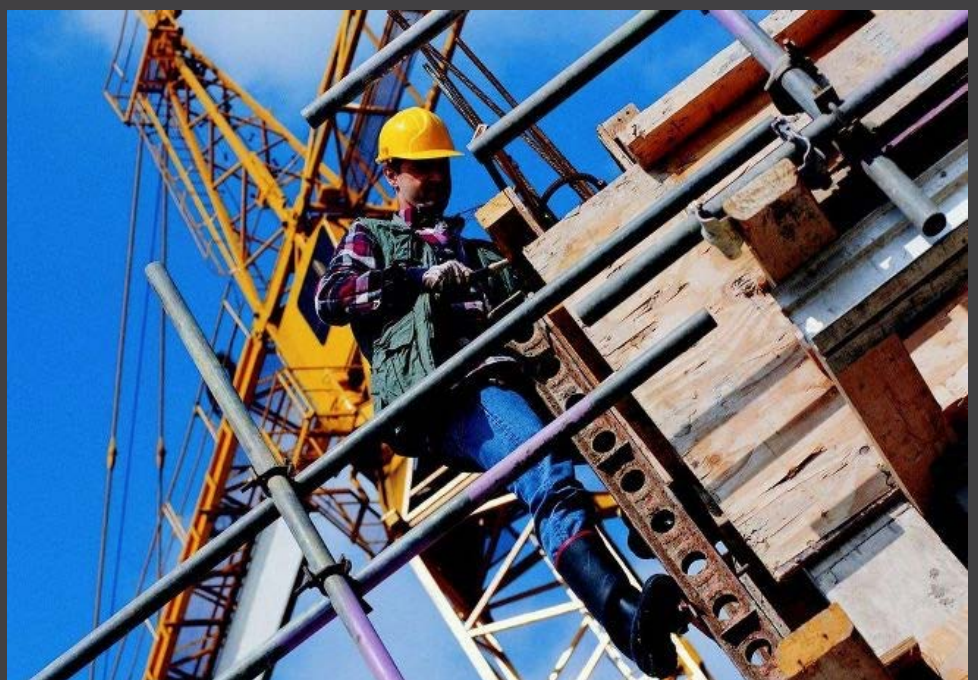
When the business environment became so unforgiving, Irish construction companies went into survival mode. They cut everything. Jobs were lost, projects abandoned, equipment sold. Effectively, if it wasn't essential, it was gone.

This of course meant that all marketing activity was completely curtailed. Probably to be expected given the circumstances. But it happened at practically the exact time that social media was being adopted as an important channel by B2B marketers. The industry was frozen as a new age of marketing began.

Fast forward to May 2013 and just as the frozen mammoth was discovered in Siberia, the Irish construction industry was finally beginning to thaw too. After 7 continuous years of decline, the sector finally began to see a slight increase in activity.

That activity has been slowly growing and we now have a sector that is beginning to get back on its feet. According to the latest CSO statistics, activity in the industry is 10% higher than it was at the same point in 2013.

Perhaps the best indicator of this upturn is the level of employment. In Q1 2014, construction employment stood at 102,300. As of the latest Quarterly National Household Survey for Q3 2014, that figure had risen to 112,400. That's a jump of 10,100 in the space of six months.



As the industry has been awoken, it has started to adapt to the world around it. There is finally revenue coming into construction companies again. That revenue has allowed them to start to making improvements in their businesses. This includes advancing their social media presence. These companies are all to aware they need to ramp up their marketing efforts if they want to keep winning business.

Obviously the frozen analogy does not apply to all Irish construction companies. Even at the worst of the recession some adapted their businesses to start working and winning contracts overseas. To succeed in those environments some Irish construction companies did develop social media and other digital channels in order to compete. Others were able to generate some revenue streams in the very difficult conditions in the Irish market and some of this was invested in their own social media activity.

But for the majority of the industry it was a time of hibernation and they allowed corporate social media development to be put on the long finger.

The impact was social media is only beginning to be tackled by the industry now.

For example there are only 480 Irish construction companies listed on LinkedIn. At the same time there are 30,875 people who are listed as working in the Irish construction industry on that platform.



If you take a look at the other platforms you'll see little presence from the Irish construction companies. It is very difficult to get exact figures for these platforms as they do not offer the same search capabilities as LinkedIn.

To address that shortfall, on behalf of the Construction Industry Federation (CIF), I recently undertook a survey of Irish construction companies

to get a better idea of their social media engagement. Here's what I found.

- 25% of Irish construction companies are on Facebook
- 15% are on Twitter
- 19% are on Google+
- 5% are on YouTube
- 1% are on Instagram

- 0% are on Pinterest
- 1% are on other platforms
- 39% are on no social media platforms

As you can see these are very small numbers. But perhaps that's not a surprise. The construction sector has always been perceived as being slower to take up new technologies and innovations. This goes for the general uptake in social media in the industry internationally.

As social media consultant Su Butcher put it, "The Construction Industry is notoriously conservative, and take up of social media has been slow and patchy". There are signs however that this situation is improving. If you look at the figures from the US and the UK there has been a lot of progress made by construction companies in their social media engagement.

A survey conducted by the US based Construction Marketing Association (CMA) last year provided a range of very interesting statistics.

- 97% of construction companies employed social media in 2013, compared to 90% in 2012.
- 47% blog, up 8% from 2012.
- 91% use LinkedIn, up 3%.
- 84% use Twitter, up 13%.
- 83% use Facebook, up 2%.
- 68% use YouTube, up 2%.
- 40% use Google+, up 16%.
- 86% believe social media helped improve awareness.
- 63% believe social media improved web traffic.
- 39% believe it helped their search rankings.
- 39% believe it increased their sales leads.

(CMA, November 2013)

The UK is also witnessing an increase in the uptake of social media amongst construction companies. A survey of the top 20 largest UK construction companies conducted earlier this year revealed the following statistics.

- 95% are on Twitter.
- 90% on Twitter are actually tweeting (posting updates).

- 55% are engaging with followers on Twitter.
- 90% have a LinkedIn company page.
- 30% are posting updates on Facebook.
- 55% have placed links on their websites which link to their social media profiles.

(Pauley, January 2014)

Going back to LinkedIn, there are now over 7.1 million people listed as working in the construction sector and 160,088 construction companies have profiles. This illustrates an industry that has massive scope for engagement and social media growth and which also has huge numbers of people and massive resources behind it.

For the social media embrace to take place in the Irish industry however, the sector needs to be fully revived. I mentioned that the industry is starting to grow again but this is still a relatively recent development. The recovery has been modestly progressing and has only started picking up pace over the last six months. The increase in activity has also been primarily focused on Dublin, the surrounding counties and to a lesser extent Cork and Galway. Large segments of the industry operating outside these regions are still to experience any pick up.

The construction sector will be one of the key areas of growth in the Irish economy over the coming years. The Government has been actively pursuing policies to encourage greater activity in the industry as they know it's the quickest way of creating jobs. One clear example of that is the commitment to spend €3.8 billion on social housing by 2020. Another was the €2.2 billion stimulus fund for infrastructure projects.

The Government has also committed to creating 60,000 additional construction jobs over the period between now and 2020. That's going to mean a huge increase in activity. They want the construction sector to account for 12% of GNP. That would represent a doubling of the current size of the industry.

On top of this, the increase in house building is still to come. Despite all the discussion and analysis about house building, there is still very little activity happening as of yet. The Government says we need to be building 25,000 housing units each year in this country, so you would expect some progress to be made on that soon.

All of these factors point to an industry set for strong growth levels over the coming years. That growth will increase competition and that will mean construction companies will have to once again increase their marketing activities, including on social media.

If the industry is going to stop being a Social Media Lost World, then it will have to take giant strides over the coming years. For anyone who is interested in B2B social media engagement this is going to provide a fascinating study on how social media practices are embraced by an industry that needs to evolve quickly.

One of the positive things of awakening from a thaw is that the construction industry can learn from the mistakes of others. Social and digital media takes a large amount of

resources and there have been lots of lessons in the area of engagement over recent years. It will be interesting to see if the sector itself will need to learn those lessons or will they skip to improved practices. Companies in the construction arena who see social media as a megaphone to blast sales messages will have missed the evolution of the platforms. Those who generate honest, engaging and creative content with a clear vision of why they are in social media will benefit the most.

Personally I think there is great scope for the industry in social media, if they take the right steps. They need to watch, study and learn from those who are further along the social media evolutionary chain and see what it takes to survive in this new environment. But that begs the question, what are the survival of the fittest practices that would best suit a massive industry as it begins to adapt to a whole new world?

(With a massive thanks to Eoin Kennedy for his help and guidance)

Links:

[\*\*Construction Marketing Association Social Media Survey\*\*](#)

[\*\*How the top UK construction companies are using social media marketing in 2014 - Pauley Creative Blog\*\*](#)

## It's All About the People #58

By Karen McCarthy



### Synopsis:

When people come together around a common cause, magic can happen. Get to Cong and meet your online contacts in the flesh.

### About Karen McCarthy:

Karen McCarthy founded CalypsoIT in 2010 with a desire to harness the power of social media to connect businesses and people. Social Media gives people an opportunity to be social and work within communities, whether that's your own personal circle of friends, community groups or business networks. There's is a depreciating need for the "hard-sell", people who work with authenticity and transparency attract trusting customers who become great advocates. Social Media helps to funnel your advocate's opinions towards your potential customers.

### Contacting Karen McCarthy:

You can follow Karen on [Twitter](#) or by [email](#).

People are the worlds most valuable asset. When people come together around common cause, magic can happen. The Internet and modern technologies have expedited the ability for people to collaborate. People are naturally social and want to connect.

The first "social network" I joined was the single parents' yahoo group in the 'noughties", there were very few Irish people in the group so I adopted the username IrishCalypso. Calypso, partly because it was the name of the boat Jacques Cousteau sailed on the seas and I was feeling adventurous, beginning a journey surfing the internet and I also love Calypso coffees! Through the yahoo groups I learned about Irish Penpals, I "virtually met" some lovely people there including one penpal who I finally met in person in Holyoke, MA 10 years later.

2007 saw a combination of my last year in college as a mature student, my signing up to [couchsurfing.org](#) and [facebook.com](#), followed by [anotherfriend.com](#). I was hooked - people helping people through the internet. My daughter at 11 was becoming quite independent and it was a time to get social.



I met some amazing people. I saw crowdsourcing in action through couchsurfing when I joined an event in Oslo where they sourced all the ingredients for a fabulous New Year week long celebration full of activities, through people on the website. Couchsurfing has opened my eyes to the wonders on my doorstep, experiencing Tramore through their eyes. On [Anotherfriend.com](#) I discovered events organised by members, a "stranger" offered to meet me and accompany me to my first event, it was a little scary as the last time I had been to Dublin was to the Zoo as a child and I wasn't accustomed to walking into a room full of strangers. People were so nice,

I started going to events around Ireland, mixing it up with couchsurfing I introduced people from both networks to each other. I went on to organise six singles events in Tramore, which brought people from all over Ireland, Oslo and Germany to enjoy the sunny south east. I joined the Kilkenny [meetup.com](#) and experienced a few cultural nights in my neighbouring county

Then came facebook! Business Pages opened the door to more networking opportunities for organisations, my IT background and work experience helped with the technical stuff but it's the connections and building of communities that inspired me to jump into the world of social media. The secret to creating lasting connections is to be real and let people know your story, let them feel your passion. Businesses too can show their personality and their story. Transparency, integrity, trust, inclusiveness and passion are key.



Attending networking events and conferences is where the online and offline world meet, connections are nurtured, advocates created, leads discovered, new ideas and information is shared with visible human interaction and emotion. While at a networking event in 2012 Samantha Kelly introduced me to Bill Liao who introduced me to Janet Carey, living not 5 mins from me who was also curious about CoderDojo. The following year I started a CoderDojo in Tramore. CoderDojo not only provides a free space or Dojo for kids to learn to code for free, it also promotes the social side, collaboration and encourages networking between dojos. People helping people, using technology and social media - the excitement of what is possible and what can be achieved is truly inspirational. I'm so looking forward to #Cong14 and meeting more wonderful positive people.

A close-up portrait of a woman with blonde hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a dark top. The background is slightly blurred, showing some indoor elements.

Whether it's for personal or business use, we all have our own reason why we use and love/hate Social Media. Why do you use it?

1. We all use Social Media.
2. Social Media can have some disadvantages but overall is mainly positive.
3. Personal, Business, Informative and Educational platform.
4. Social Media is here to stay.

Áine is currently studying Digital Media in GMIT and is new to the blogging world. She joined the MediStori team in May 2014 and has since shown her competency and personal flair in the area of social media and web development. Áine recently finished a Higher Diploma in Cloud and Mobile Software Development after acquiring a taste for web development, when working for a busy, central construction office in New York helping to develop their own website. Using her initiative, she completed a number of courses in web development, Photoshop and Java Programming to get as much knowledge as possible, and after completing a B.Comm in NUIG, she also added to her portfolio a wide range of administrative skills. Diverse by nature, Áine also adds years of invaluable experience in dealing with the public from



Whether you like it or not, Social Media has taken over. Along with everything, it has its own set of negative aspects: Concerns people have over their privacy; regrets about things they posted or pictures they shared in the past; bullying; less face to face interaction; fake profiles from predators and fear parents have for their children having access to inappropriate things at a young age. But how do people voice their concerns and objections about social media... Only by using social media...

Over the past ten years or so, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn have been ways for people to share their opinions, photos, personal comments and CV's online. Even with people having concerns, we've all liked, shared, tagged, posted, connected and engaged multiple times. But why exactly do we do it?

A lot of social media sites, like Facebook for example, were originally set up as a way for friends to communicate with each other. Then the phenomenon took over! Social Networking has become a way for businesses to advertise, promote music and celebrities, finding your soul mate through online dating, sharing political views, etc. Just two weeks ago, reality star Kim Kardashian took part in a photo shoot for Paper Magazine, which was released because they wanted to #breaktheinternet through the use of social media. Whether people liked it or hated it, appropriate or not, even if it was considered going too far and too sexually explicit to be seen on billboards and in papers, everyone was commenting on it, sharing it and tweeting about it. Even though the newlywed Mrs. Kardashian/West didn't actually "break the internet", both she and the magazine got the publicity they wanted. Without a doubt, Social Media has changed the way people do things.

Personally, I use social media for two purposes: Personal and Business. I first began using Bebo, then shortly followed by Facebook and Twitter. I find them an excellent way of keeping in touch with people and sharing pictures with friends worldwide. Through these platforms, I have also been able to read blogs that friends composed on their travelling adventures. For me, they are also excellent tools to keep up to date on current issues and breaking news.

Watching the most recent music videos on YouTube is also something I love. Pinterest is a great source for getting tips on your interests such as makeup/hair/beauty,

working in the hospitality industry.

### Contacting Aine McManamon:

You can follow Aine on [Twitter](#), or [Facebook](#) (work and personal), [email](#) her or connect with her on [LinkedIn](#).

great recipes, fitness, quotes, etc. Most recently, social media was vital for me in my education as I took part in an online diploma. Here lectures were available via Adobe Connect and it was important to be able to contact fellow classmates through Facebook or Google Hangouts to help each other with assignments, along with YouTube providing an excellent learning tool through helpful tutorials. After finishing this course I was then introduced to the world of LinkedIn, an excellent source for networking while also allowing me to have an online type of CV presence, along with automated “recommended for my needs” job listings and useful, educational articles on the industry I’m involved and interested in.

After I started my internship I’ve also got to see a completely different side to social media... The Business Side! The team at MediStori use Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and LinkedIn, not only to tell people about our product but for many other aspects. As we are promoting a product for the health industry and believe in self-management we offer blogs, photos, articles and posts about the health system, self-management, awareness for different charities and world health days along with positive, inspirational quotes and every so often links to our website. By using social media we are able to see who our target market is, their opinions, their likes and dislikes and what we can do to help them, along with doing our bit to raise awareness.

Some businesses also pay for advertisements, which influence people and draw them to their website. This way they can use content which might promote their business or aid selling their products online, along with having people give them public feedback and recommendations that everybody can see. Most recently people took to social media to raise awareness about Ebola. For example, after the international premiere of “Do they know it’s Christmas” on Saturday 15th November, #BandAid30 was immediately trending on twitter and they raised an excess of €1 million within minutes of the premiere on pre-orders alone.

The main reason I started using Facebook etc. was to keep in contact with friends which is one their major advantages, but yet also a major drawback. I’ve lost count of the amount of times I’ve been with friends for dinner and they would be more engrossed in checking their newsfeed or taking pictures of their food to tweet to the world. I myself have been guilty... When meeting up with friends for a catch up I’ve found myself spending most of the time messaging people in other parts of the world. Great to re-connect with my friends who are down under or in the big apple but not so great for my friend that is right beside me, trying desperately to tell me something that’s happening in his/her life.

So yes, as so many before me have argued, there are many advantages along with disadvantages that come hand in hand with social media. But one thing that everyone agrees is that it’s here to stay. Everyone has their own reasons for using Social Media. Why do you use it?

# The Reality of Virtual Currency - It's Not Worth the Paper its Printed On. #60

By Paul Killoran



## Synopsis:

In past century, we've abandoned physical currency in favor of a virtual currency. I examine Aristotle's thoughts on the characteristics of a good currency and question whether or not today's currency has any value. Our collective belief in the currency is integral to its intrinsic value and without this belief our currency is worthless.

## 4 Takeaways

1. Aristotle's thoughts on currency and an understanding of his 4 characteristics.
2. The evolution of currency over the past century.
3. An experiment based on the "Law of Conservation of Matter".
4. Proof that there's only one thing that has intrinsic value.

## About Paul Killoran:

Paul is the founder & CEO of Ex Ordo. Fundamentally he is a problem-solving engineer that tries to think a little bit left field, much to the frustration of his girlfriend. He is passionate about startups, the tech community and Galway. Random Fact: Before founding his first tech company, he trained as a ballet dancer in London, which probably explains his twitter handle.

## Contacting Paul Killoran:



It's a Tuesday night. I'm in my office. I'm stressed.

Wages are due tomorrow and "computer says no". My online banking isn't showing me the numbers that I need to see. A sequence of electrons in a database somewhere is governing my emotions at this moment in time. Emotions that are real, in a world that is real, controlled by a game that doesn't exist.

Whether we like it or not, our lives are governed by a cocktail of digital currencies. In less than a century, we have surrendered the gold standard in favour of virtual fiat currencies. And now we speculate over Bitcoin, a truly virtual currency that is not owned or controlled by any government or bank. Instead, it exists as a sequence of ephemeral ions magnetised on my hard drive.

Even if we don't subscribe to Bitcoin and remain "traditional" with online banking, SEPA payments, PayPal accounts, Facebook credits and Apple

Pay; we cannot deny that we've abandoned physical currency in favour of its digital cousin. These days I don't carry much more than €40 in my wallet. Everything else is in the "cloud".

In days gone by, Aristotle the Greek philosopher discovered, formulated, and analysed the problem of commensurability. He wondered how ratios for a fair exchange of heterogeneous things could be set. He searched for a principle that would make it possible to equate what is apparently unequal and non-comparable.

Basically, he theorised over the fundamental characteristics that define currency today. In particular, he suggested that a currency should have intrinsic value and particularly he suggested that the value of money should be inherent in the token exchanged. For

You can follow Paul on [Twitter](#), his [personal](#) or [work websites](#) or connect with him on [LinkedIn](#).

example when you exchange a gold coin, the value of the coin is backed by the value of the gold itself.

What's wrong with the world, mama? People livin' like they ain't got no mamas!

So where did it all go wrong? How were we coerced in to believing in a digital currency; a currency that lacks any sort of intrinsic value; a currency that doesn't really exist? Except in the pixilated number on my laptop screen, that's preventing me from paying wages this week.

We are shackled by the puppet master that controls this currency. We evict people from their homes every day because they fail to pay their mortgage.

People go hungry in third world countries because they can't afford food.

And more recently, there are people that have taken their own lives because of the financial pressure that they're under. The virtual rules, under which we are governed, have very real implications.

But these rules only exist if we believe in them. And our belief is fundamental to the existence of this virtual currency. If we stop believing in the currency, then it loses its value immediately. And we all know what happened on the night of the Irish bank guarantee. We nearly stopped believing.

If you take a step back and observe that we've created. You'll see that we've developed a concept that depends on our belief and nothing else.

It's also a belief that is shared by seven billion people on this planet.

You might say that we've created the largest religion on Earth; the largest single belief system known to man.

In a world where we're so tied up with the rules governing this "religious" belief, we're often blinded from seeing the only thing has true intrinsic value.

## Internet and Interculture. #61

By Joe Kearns

### Synopsis:

In a world that is constantly on-line and connected, where we can talk to anyone at anytime, where we can exchange ideas, thoughts and feelings with people far away, can young people who go to live in and learn about another culture be truly immersed in the experience? To develop any kind of understanding of another culture or to try to learn a new language in another country, requires great effort of will and dedication to overcome the natural challenges. If young people are always 'tethered' back to their home culture and language can they really learn from their experience abroad?

### 4 Takeaways

1. Learning a new language or culture requires immersion.
2. Always-on internet connection makes immersion difficult.
3. Internet access and social media have the power to enhance the experience.
4. Young people need to think about how technology can help or hinder the experience.

### About Joe Kearns:

Joe Kearns is an Intercultural trainer who runs his own small training company. Joe originally qualified as an engineer and after time in France and Ethiopia began his IT career in the mid-80's. Joe worked at a number



Do young people of today get less from an overseas experience than the generation before the Internet and the arrival of social media?

To talk about this I need to use two examples.

When I was a student I spent a lot of time in France and at one point studied French there for about three months – this was the early 80's. At that time if I wanted to phone home I had to go the post office and wait for a 'Cabine'. This was a phone box in the post office which one got access to after paying for a token to make the International call. It was expensive so I phoned home at most every few weeks – maybe even less than once a month. I wrote home when I could but that took some effort.

The end result of all this was that I was immersed in the world of the friends I made in Lyon, speaking French and experiencing life there. I should add that the ancient TV I had only showed French channels.

Next I spent two years in Ethiopia from 1983 to 1985. During my time there I made two phone calls home – at Christmas. I wrote more often to friends and family – for many reasons but mainly to relate my experiences.

Now fast forward to about 2010 and my nephew going to France for a university term to help improve his French and get to know France and something of the legal system there. He left a girlfriend back in the UK and so when he was in France he talked to her on Skype most days. He had a mobile phone with a local SIM card so could make cheap calls home as he wished. He was also on Twitter and Facebook. To contrast further his experience with that of mine, he could even afford to fly home twice for week-end parties during his 3 months! How much that has to do with the age of social media is a topic for another day.

of multinationals including Nixdorf Computer and Hewlett Packard in roles from programmer to IT Director. He also studied for his Computer Science degree at Trinity College during that period. In recent years Joe has focussed his energies on Intercultural matters particularly cultural issues in virtual teams and the influence technology is having on national cultures.

### Contacting Joe Kearns:

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You can follow Joe on [Twitter](#), his [website](#) or contact him on [Skype](#) or by [email](#).

So, did the access to social media and technology enhance or take away from the experience? A superficial look might say his experience could not have been as deep as mine but I think it is more subtle and complex than that.

I will focus on looking at both of our experiences in France, my Ethiopian experience has many facets to it beyond the discussion here. Suffice to say things have changed dramatically from 1983!

I have little doubt, that by one measure, how much French was learned, my experience in the 80's was far more effective on that score than that of my nephew's. I came home in 1982 speaking extremely competent French but I don't believe my nephew reached anywhere near my level. Given my experience teaching English as a foreign language I know that the more access students have to their mother tongue the more slowly they will learn English. I believe my nephew's access to social media and its attendant use of English, plus his use of English as a medium for general Internet use, interfered with his absorption of French.

There is a more insidious negative, which is borne out in studies, and that is the capacity of modern students to get over the initial 'downer' of moving to another country. Almost everyone who goes to live in another country experiences an initial elation due to the excitement of the change and the novelty of their new life. They then, usually after a few weeks, maybe as little as one depending on circumstances, they go through a 'downer' when they often had feelings of loneliness, frustration, confusion, homesickness and more - and often want to go home. The best advice is to stick that period out and you most people come out the other side to enjoy their new country. Sometimes that transformation is so profound that people get to love their new life and country more than their place of origin! The return to a previous existence can be harder than the original move to the 'foreign' land.

It seems that the 'tether' of social media to the home country and life makes that 'downer' period longer and harder to get through. It seems that results in more students not completing their overseas assignment than in the pre-internet days.

But let's take a more positive viewpoint. When students go to live abroad today the Internet allows them to learn quickly about their new life, food, customs, history and more. Most importantly about the culture. It can also give access to locals who can enhance the experience. Internet tools and social media can enrich knowledge and understanding of the new country and most importantly create avenues to maintain contacts and learning after the return home.

In the end I believe the critical factor will be the enthusiasm of the student to learn from the overseas experience and the extent to which they understand the advantages and disadvantages of their immersion in Social Media.

## The kind is dead. #62

By Clodagh Barry



### Synopsis:

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Is social media the answer or a distraction to helping expand communication with close knit communities.

### 4 Takeaways

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1. Share.
2. Share.
3. Share
4. More sharing.

### About Clodagh Barry:

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Founder & Director - Research Central servicing the all island research community NUI Galway, Research Office - Research Career Strategy. Horizon 2020 The Hub in Headford, Founder, Interim Chair EXPLORE Manager & Founder - 65 innovative new projects underway since 2012 Experienced Programme & Project Manager Bright Ideas 'Embedding Innovation' Group Leader Entrepreneurship Manager, Mentor & Advisor Business Development - Delivered new products & services into international markets and achieved sales growth - Europe, US & Middle East.

### Contacting Clodagh Barry:

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You can follow Clodagh on [Twitter](#) or by [email](#).

In the many journeys I have undertaken in my career to date, there are few trends i.e. social media which elusively managed to run away into a world of their own. I am a fan, an advocate and a campaigner for renewed and fresh communication within the communities I work with.

I am looking towards the communications superhighway to aid those who are huddling in their own safe environment and are in one sense being left behind. They can reach the entire world in seconds, and yet cannot converse their ideas beyond their inner cohort of colleagues. Be they PhD students, early stage researchers, community groups, SMEs, the divide is growing wider and deeper ~ the skill to communicate lost in the maze of computer algorithms. Couple this with not living on a broadband infrastructure which attracts all the hot talent, expertise and capacity to an urban centre.... where does this leave those who are out in the cold? Is social media an oxymoron dressed in sexy clothing and running around only in popular circles? Does wider/ actual engagement matter?

I am looking forward to bearing witness and engaging with the elite of the social media world in the context of an ancient and majestic rural landscape, nestled in the woods of South Mayo. I want to understand the jargon and cross the bridge in opening up communication to a wider populace.

I am on a quest to bridge that divide. The last High King of Ireland Rory O'Connor died in Cong. The king is dead, long live the Queen.

## Six Tips On Growing Local Meetups. #63

By Jason Roe



### Synopsis:

Meetup events soak up lots of resources and results can sometimes be disappointing. With some careful tweaking you can ensure greater attendance and better events.

### 4 Takeaways

1. Take care in the selection of topics and speakers.
2. Focus on content rather than venue.
3. Leverage the attendees list.
4. Charge and experiment with the format.

### About Jason Roe:

**Jason Roe** is into #startups and #opendata. Working in [@PredictInsight](#) and founder of [@TeamParkYa](#), Board Member of [@iia](#) since 2009.

### Contacting Jason Roe:

You can catch him on twitter  
[@jasonroe](#)



In 2014 (this year) a small group and myself took it upon us to run a series of six events called **Growth Hackers Dublin**. We felt that there was a gap in the market for a start-up event where speakers shared their stories about how their companies grew.

#### 1. Find A Popular Topic

Growth Hacking has been a bit of a controversial topic among the start-up community. Without going too much into the history, it had its roots in the lean start-up methodology and some say it effectively results in marketing by spread sheet. As it's quite a technical area there are endless amounts of people trying to get their heads around where they should focus their attention.

#### 2. Only Accept Amazing Speakers

In Dublin we are quite fortunate to have such a great talent pool to draw upon for speakers. Not all of your speakers are going to be top class on the night so just accept that. Make sure to get them to commit to a deadline and to have speaking material over a week before the event. Always have a backup speaker lined up just in case.

We made it our mission to have the best local speakers around. The great thing about interesting speakers is that they already have a bit of a following. By picking only the best speakers you can be guaranteed that they will also bring their communities on board to promote your event.

#### 3. The Venue Doesn't Matter

The venue doesn't matter all that much at the start. As long as you know that you have a certain amount of capacity and that the venue is located fairly central then you are on to a winner. Some venues might be a bit cooler but at the end of the day this doesn't

impact on attendance.

At our first Growth Hackers meetup we used a local coworking space. Our first event was free and we could only fit around 75 people but we had 150 registered. We had to turn some people away on the night but it created a real buzz in the room. As we grew, we found that the only thing that really matters is the location of the venue and the capacity.

Maybe this is an Irish thing but some people say you need to have alcohol or a bar and that you must feed people. I totally disagree. We tested some events with food and some without. Some with an open bar, some with just bar available and some without any drink and there was no measurable difference in terms of attendance.

#### 4. People Buy People

A lot of the time event organisers tend to showcase the speakers. The majority of people who attend your meetup want to meet the other attendees not the speakers. Yet as an organiser you may be tempted to only promote the headline speakers. You are missing a trick. You should use every opportunity to promote your attendees, as they are the ones who will promote it. It's a real win situation.

#### 5. Charge People To Attend

This may rub some people up the wrong way but I strongly believe that if a meetup is worth attending then people must be willing to pay to attend. As an organiser of an event, a free ticket means nothing. Over 40% of people who register for a free ticket never show up. This stat is even worse on platforms like facebook and meetup.com. When someone has paid, the no-show figure drops to less than 10%.

How much should I charge? We tested a lot of pricing. It looks like 10 euro is about the max someone will pay for an established meetup. We found that two tickets for 20 was also a winner. Set your price on day one and make it clear when your offers expires. We found that an early bird that expires the week before your event was the winning ticket, with a 20-euro ticket for anyone who came to the party late.

If you want your meetup to last, you need to be able to charge for it. Also be strict on who gets a free ticket. If someone wants a free ticket then they can volunteer on the night and help out.

#### 6. Test The Format

We constantly tested the format at our events. Some things worked and some things didn't. We tried things like open kimonos, interviews and workshops that didn't turn out so well. Structured talks seemed to work. Q&A sessions from the audience also seemed to be popular with attendees.

I'm going to be launching a new series of events in 2015 called Traction. Keep an eye out on [Traction.ie](http://Traction.ie) and Join the [Traction mailing list](#).

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[www.congregation.ie](http://www.congregation.ie)