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MEDIA >>

Radical Digital Transformation

As I sat down to write this — just a few paragraphs summing up an issue we've devoted to digital transformation of mainstream marketing — I got an email that caught me off guard. By 2015, the forecaster said, 208 million of us will be using "phablets," a cross between a smartphone and a tablet.

I had to laugh, and not just because it's a dumb word. (Sorry, Samsung.) Or because of the visual — hundreds of millions of us yapping on what is essentially an enormous and clunky cell phone. Or even the realization that size doesn't matter, because — if the teens in my world are any indication — no one will even want to talk on the phone by 2015.

It's because marketers are already bemoaning how far behind the curve they are on both mobile-phone marketing and tablets (see Gianna Palmer's story on p. 48). How the heck will they ever get on board the phablet train?

Welcome to the radical digital transformation of marketing: As soon as marketers get the hang of an emerging platform, it morphs, evolves or entirely changes its stripes, becoming more or less relevant to consumers in unpredictable ways. And of course that's been true, to a degree, ever since the digital revolution began back in the 1990s. What's new is that we seem to have finally reached the tipping point: There's no longer any way to deny that while there are no new rules, the old ones don't apply.

So they lumber along, not fully committing to uncertain digital avenues. "It's like paying $9 a gallon at the last gas station before Death Valley," observes MediaPost editor-at-large Bob Garfield, on page 54. "You know you're getting gouged, but … what are your options?"

Of course, there are options. Plenty of them. They're just hard to measure, and thus hard to justify. Read John Capone's riveting take on the puzzle that is Pinterest, on page 24. And they also have a maddening way of backfiring, even on smart marketers. See Gavin O'Malley's thoughtful piece on p. 20, about how social media has bitten brands like McDonald's.

Some brands are far more nimble in these uncertain times than others, as Doug Quenqua writes on p. 10, and plan campaigns that seamlessly cross platforms.

Amid all this rapid change, both in the technology consumers are clamoring for and the inventive ways marketers are finding to be part of it all, we got hit on the head with a countertrend: Turns out that just as execs are catching on this digital sea change, consumers are over it. In a commencement address at Boston University last month, Google exec Eric Schmidt preached to the Gen Y choir, telling young graduates to step back from all that connectivity for an hour a day. "Life is not a series of status updates," he said, recognizing that

> THERE'S NO LONGER ANY WAY TO DENY THAT WHILE THERE ARE NO NEW RULES, THE OLD ONES DON'T APPLY.

the tens of millions of people Facebooking their way through life might actually prefer to live it.

What he's hit on is a growing contempt for having to be connected, and an increasing desire to use those connections the way we want, not be tyrannized and/or irritated. (That can't be good news for Mr. and Ms. Display Advertiser, can it?)

Patrick Reynolds echoes that sentiment in his op-ed on marketing that neither pushes nor pulls. "You yearn to live life as a digital Spartan," he writes. "You're tired of search, tired of being sought."

And on page 70, writer Karl Greenberg coaxes some bombshells from EuroRSCG's Tom Morton, with research unveiling some intensely anti-tech sentiments. Of a large worldwide sample, 40 percent of young people feel, at least sometimes, that thanks to all the connectivity, they are "wasting their lives."

We'd love to hear what you think about this debate. Email me at sarah@mediapost.com.

SARAH MAHONEY, EDITOR

Correction: In "The Demo: Not Dead, But Different" in the Spring, 2012 issue, Kantar Media was incorrectly identified as belonging to GroupM. Both are owned by WPP.

The Brand Marketers Summit

This June, brand executives from around the country will attend MediaPost's Brand Marketers Summit in Kohler, Wisc., to take the waters at the legendary Kohler Spa and learn how best to navigate the sea changes in this new era. For more about the event, or to learn how to watch it live online, go to http://www.mediapost.com/brandmarkerssummit/.
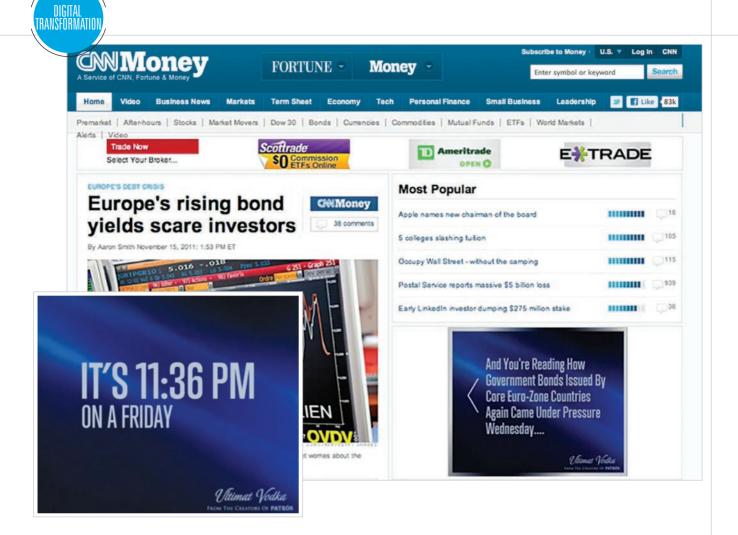
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Platform-Proof Campaigns

How marketers are crafting strategies that optimize and achieve the best balance across all platforms **BY DOUGLAS QUENQUA**

Imagine you're a banker. It's 10:08 on a Friday night and you're still in the office, reading an article online about the financial crisis in Greece. You're 28 years old, living in New York City, but thanks to your job, you might as well be 78. You haven't been out with friends, much less someone who might consider dating you, for months.

Suddenly, a familiar-seeming ad appears on your computer. It looks just like a funny poster you saw in the Wall Street subway station this morning — something about living in New York and making a million dollars but spending less time outside than a prisoner. There was something in *Forbes* last week, too. Or was it *Worth*?

"It's 10:08 p.m.," reads the Internet ad, "and you're reading an article about the financial crisis in Greece. Get a life. Find Balance. Find Ultimat."

Creepy? Maybe. But also an example of how a good integrated campaign can work in 2012. Rather than operating across platforms simply for the sake of it, as some advertisers were inclined to do in the early days of digital advertising, good cross-platform campaigns today deploy a single idea across a select handful of media, letting each do what it does best, one building on the other. Posters grab your attention, banner ads exploit personal information, a Twitter feed offers deals and interaction. Today, a good integrated campaign feels tailored to your life and your habits. Sometimes, it can appear to follow you.

"How can you use different media to tell someone a story that motivates them and drives that change in behavior you're looking for?" asks Nathan Swenberg, global communications planning leader at BBDO. "What's important is understanding how people are using those different platforms, and then thinking about how you can string those experiences together."

Like most good cross-platform efforts, the 2011 campaign for Ultimat, a pre-mium vodka brand owned by Patrón, started with a very specific target audience and a big, flexible idea. It didn't operate on every platform, just the ones it needed to grab its audience and make its point.

The campaign started with a simple challenge: Not everyone is going to pay $40 for a 750-milliliter bottle of vodka. So "we started out knowing we wanted to hit a white-collar target," says Eric Silver, chief creative officer for Amalgamated, the creative agency that handles the brand for Patrón. The decision was made to go after young finance professionals (bankers, traders) with an interest in nightlife and upscale brands — people who tend to have a lot of money but work long, difficult hours. Hence the tag line, "Find Balance. Find Ultimat."
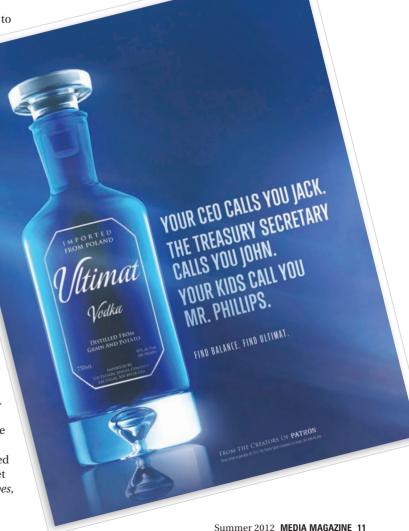
But where to reach these people?

The campaign launched with out-of-home ads, particularly in places like the Wall Street subway station where bankers were likely to walk through every day. To appeal to its young demographic, Patrón paired a matter-of-fact, almost mocking tone with a highly personal message: "You work for the best firm in the city. You make seven figures. You spend less time outside than prisoners of Rikers Island." Similar ads followed in magazines that the target was likely to read, like *Forbes*, *Worth* and *The New York Times Magazine.*

But the key was to hit the bankers where they lived — at the office, on their computers. So Amalgamated came up with a way to make highly targeted Web ads. "Through this API, the banner would know what you were reading," says Silver, referring to an application programming interface. "The banner would say, 'It's 11:08 p.m., you're reading an article about how bad news in Greece is spilling over into the markets in Italy. Stop it and get a life.'" Patrón knew that its target audience tended to be using the Internet for work purposes when they would prefer to be out socializing, and the banner ads turned that insight into engagement.

Later, on Facebook, the personal became social. Amalgamated produced an app for Ultimat called The Social Life Audit that would analyze your profile, grade your social life and give you suggestions on how to improve it. "It would scan your photos, and through facial recognition, mood recognition, gender analysis, come up with this score," says Silver. (In a clever nod to social media trends, the app deducted points

for pictures in which people made "duck faces.")

By providing suggestions on how users could improve their scores, it provided an incentive for them to change their habits (i.e., get out and drink).

The campaign might be as notable for what it did not include. There was no mobile element, no TV, no radio, nothing (gasp!) on Twitter. The campaign went where it needed to go — and nowhere else. "We had a target we wanted to go after," says Silver, "and we used the media we needed to reach them."

Such is the evolution of cross-platform campaigns. Five to 10 years ago, when the Internet was younger, social media was new, and mobile devices weren't so smart, clients were more apt to demand "a Facebook strategy" or "a viral campaign," much to the chagrin of their agencies.

"The thing I heard five years ago was, 'We'll just do a viral video, and everyone will see it and that way we won't have to spend money on TV,'" says Swenberg.

While that mindset certainly still exists among many clients, as well as some agencies, the savvier operators have come to appreciate the various platforms for what they are: different pathways to various audiences, each uniquely suited to different forms of engagement. What they are not is a frontier land in which to plant a flag just to

prove a point.

Which media channel to use "should be one of the last questions a client should be asking," says Silver. "Where we try to start is, what's your current brand perception? How do they want to be perceived? What's the overarching brand strategy? What's the urgency or what's the time line?"

"Once you know that," he says, "that's when you calmly figure out the proper channels to attack."

Of course, following this advice sometimes means being absent on platforms where your audience might be looking for you — a prospect that, five years ago, was considered by many to be

brand suicide. But there is mounting evidence that being selective about which platforms you choose to occupy can work better than being on a platform in which you can't afford to fully invest.

Swenberg tells the story of a consumer packaged-goods client who, faced with a tightening budget and increasingly fragmented media presence, decided to rein in his company's media presence in order to better focus its spending. "The guy who did it took a lot of flak from a lot of people — if I told you the brand you'd be surprised," he says. "This guy said, 'You know, I've only got the resources to do a good job in TV and the store.' So all these other things got turned

off, and all of a sudden his sales went up." Having seen the benefits of concentrating his ad budget, the client proceeded to carry out the strategy across its various brands, and, according to Swenberg, is still doing so today.
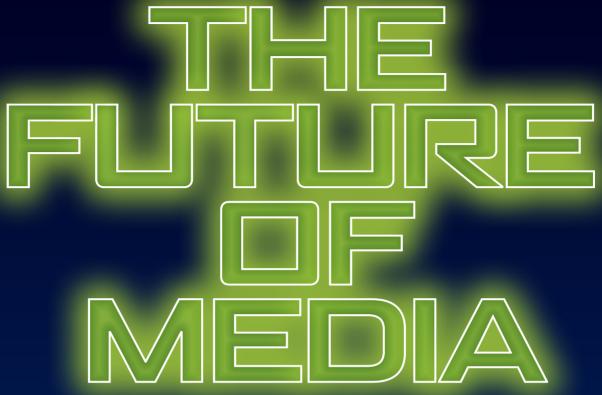
"He said, 'I'm going to focus on the two platforms that are most important for my business,'" notes Swenberg, "and it worked for him."

It may be a titillating story to CMOs with shrinking budgets. But what about the frustrated consumer who goes on Twitter to complain about your company only to discover no one is listening? Or who tries to find out more about your company by doing a Web search for the tag line featured in a print ad, and finds himself wading through two pages of results before finding your site?

"Yes, people expect you to be on Twitter and they might want to interact with your brand online after seeing a spot," says Swenberg, but that isn't always a good enough reason to open channels you aren't prepared to monitor properly. "If your legal department isn't set up to deal with something like that, if you don't have people who can represent the brand on that medium, then you're probably going to do yourself more harm than good for being there."

Others find that the right idea can translate to almost all digital media without a massive investment of time or money. The creative challenge in formulating a cross-platform campaign has

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always been finding an idea that works across the chosen platforms. The old clichés about "the big idea" still apply when working multiplatform, say creative chiefs. But in addition to being "big," an idea also has to be flexible. And if it's flexible enough, it can work anywhere with minimal investment.

"You have to have an idea and an insight that isn't media specific," Marty Orzio, chief creative officer at Gotham, says. "And the better the insight, the more compelling it's going to be."

Sometimes, the most flexible ideas are also the most simple. For Denny's, Gotham last year chose to promote a new "cheese-inspired" menu with the tag line "Let's Get Cheesy." The idea was just silly and broad enough to translate to any number of media.

"From top to bottom, everything resonated cheesiness," says Orzio. TV ads featured diners using classic cheesy pickup lines to talk about their food ("This cheesy dinner is a parking ticket. It's got 'fine' written all over it.") But other efforts required more creativity than cash. Gotham created a branded "cheesy love song" station for music service Grooveshark. It launched a Tumblr called "Cheese on My ___" that invited people to upload pictures of their favorite things (say, their cat) with a slice of cheese on them. On Denny's Web site, they offered cheesy ecards ("You're Grate!") that friends could send to each other (and that came with discounts on food).

Another creative challenge with any cross-platform campaign is maintaining a consistent look throughout, so your consumer makes the connection between different elements. Gotham used a consistent aesthetic throughout its "Cheesy" work — similar colors, fonts and vocabulary, for example — but Orzio says that these days, visual consistency is less important than tonal consistency.

"You find a way to make it feel the same, have the same kind of energy," he says. "It may not have the specific words on a rational level, but it still makes you feel the same. You're being consistent but inconsistent."

One challenge regarding multiplatform campaigns that never seems to get any easier is measuring, buying and balancing your creative across media. Different media still measure and report their audiences in different ways, making it difficult not only to buy media in a cross-platform campaign, but also to know just how much of your budget should be allocated to one platform over another.

Luckily, most of the major measurement firms have at least taken steps to resolve these problems. Nielsen and ComScore have both debuted cross-platform measurement initiatives that profess to bridge the divide between incongruous metrics. "It's still not as easy as it ought to be," says Michael Epstein, director of strategic resource, North America, at Mindshare, "because the measurements are still not standardized." But it's getting there.

In a bid to bring some clarity to the situation (and promote its cross-platform measurement product), Nielsen teamed with Yahoo in 2010 on a study called "Cross-Platform Campaigns: Getting to a Smarter Mix." The idea

was to help shed some light on how cross-platform efforts could better balance buys. To do this, they analyzed four existing cross-platform campaigns to see where they were over-invested and where they were under-invested. Angela Reynar, senior director of category insights at Yahoo, says they used Nielsen's software to "map the reach and frequency curve, and see at which point the curve flattens out and you get no more incremental reach."

After finding that a campaign was over-invested in a particular medium, they tried to find a better balance by (theoretically) moving money in and out of other media. "What we did was complete trial and error," she continues. "We said, let's take 5 percent from the most over-invested media and put it somewhere else, and let's take an additional 5 percent and put it somewhere else, and that's how we got to what the optimal was."

What they discovered was that, relative to where their audiences were, the marketers were all over-invested in traditional media and under-invested in digital and mobile platforms. In other words, rather than making new impressions with untapped consumers online or in mobile, the campaigns were making impressions with the same consumers over and over on television.

"They were getting no incremental reach from a large portion of that spend," says Reynar, "so you could cut back pretty heavily on that TV schedule, put the money elsewhere and get the bigger bang for your buck in terms of reach."

The idea that many mar-

keters are still over-invested in traditional media won't come as a surprise to most media buyers. Despite the rush toward digital in recent years, "it's still safer to do what we did last year than it is to do something different and better," says Reynar, "because if I did what I did last year and it doesn't work, I can't really be blamed for it."

There are also still many CMOs who are simply more comfortable operating in the traditional media realm. "If you want to shift dollars out of TV," says Epstein, "you all of a sudden are talking to clients about, well, if I take these 100 GRPs away from TV, you're gong to get two online." Epstein is using hyperbole to make his point, which is that explaining the benefits of digital impressions to people who've spent decades thinking in GRPs can be a challenge. "You start having these conversations about engagement, but what does engagement really mean?"

That comfort with traditional media, coupled with an economy that doesn't exactly encourage experimentation, could have as much to do with marketers being more selective about which platforms to operate on as any other factor. But if the result is campaigns that exist on particular platforms for a reason, not just because a CMO is afraid of missing out, then that, too, can be considered progress.

"The smart way to plan is to understand what the role of each channel is going to be and then use it accordingly," says Epstein. "You sometimes get people who just want to do something because it's the new thing. I think we need to be a little smarter." Ⓜ

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SOCIAL SETBACKS

Fans can be fickle, and friends can turn into foes. Lessons from the frontlines of social media

BY GAVIN O'MALLEY

Most ad execs now believe that social media has surpassed search — and is poised to overtake online display advertising — as the No. 1 source of digital media planning and buying.

A recent survey — conducted by Strata, the agency media software and processing firm owned by Comcast — found that 69 percent of agency honchos consider social, i.e., Facebook, the "focus" of their digital ad spending. That's up 32 percent year-over-year and puts social just behind display (71 percent) as the dominant digital media-buying platform.

What does that mean for marketers? Unfortunately, a lot more pressure to perform in a channel that remains remarkably unproven, hard to measure and riddled with cautionary tales.

Take Pepsi and its Refresh campaign, which analysts still point to as the best example of social marketing's shortcomings.

Awareness generated by the Pepsi Refresh Project was enviable — close to 3 billion impressions from earned media by the end of 2010. The campaign, however, failed to have a strong impact on the brand's overall sales. According to Beverage Digest, original Pepsi slid 0.3 percent in market share and 4.8 percent in volume last year.

"Refresh proved that social can't take the place of other channels," says a respected industry analyst who asked not to be identified. "Whatever it achieved, it didn't help [PepsiCo] sell any Pepsi." (PepsiCo representatives declined to comment for this story.)

A more recent example of a social

LOL

marketing snafu came courtesy of McDonald's, after it paid to appear at the top of the trends list on Twitter's home page. Rather than encouraging Twitter users to wax positive about the brand, the hashtag #McDStories served as a lightning rod for consumers' worst impressions of McDonald's and its food.

The effort personified "a social effort gone wrong," according to Jordan Bitterman, senior vice president and social marketing practice lead at Digitas. "The fast food chain encouraged its audience to use the #McDStories hashtag to share nostalgic stories on Happy Meals. The conversations took a U-turn and attracted critical tweets about horror stories regarding McDonald's instead.

Adds Bitterman, #McDStories was "a prime example of the unexpected, non-formulaic nature that comes with the social media territory."

McDonald's doesn't deny its social misstep, though its marketing team thinks the campaign's negative impact has been overblown. "#McDStories was an unfortunate blip on the radar and not the calamity that some have tried to make it out to be," Dana Martin, McDonald's social media supervisor and Rick Wion, McDonald's director of social media, said in a joint statement. "On the day we ran the Promoted Trend, there were 72,000 tweets about McDonald's overall with only 2,000 mentioning #McDStories. In comparison, 10 percent of that day's conversation was fans sharing happy, positive tweets about the 'EggMcMuffinOf' campaign."

Still, "McDonald's asked for feedback … and it wasn't ready for the backlash," notes Dr. Augustine Fou, a digital strategy adviser and social media expert.

LG is another brand that was recently burned by a hashtag. Apparently, many people thought '#LGParentism' stood for 'Lesbian Gay Parentism,' rather than the brand LG," according to eMarketer principal analyst Debra Williamson.

"The good news is that these brands ended up rolling with it, and they took the criticism — and the confusion — in stride," Williamson says. "But I think spending a bit more time developing a solid hashtag is worthwhile, and some brands aren't doing this."

Where else are marketers going wrong with social? For one — while Facebook is happy to have the scratch — advertisers are spending too much money on the medium, according to Fou.

"The fact [is] that it doesn't take large budgets to do social correctly," Fou insists. "In fact, when compared with TV advertising, when you eliminate the cost for making glossy TV ads and the media cost of airing the ad, social media marketing is only a tiny fraction of the cost of TV, and it can be orders of magnitude more effective."
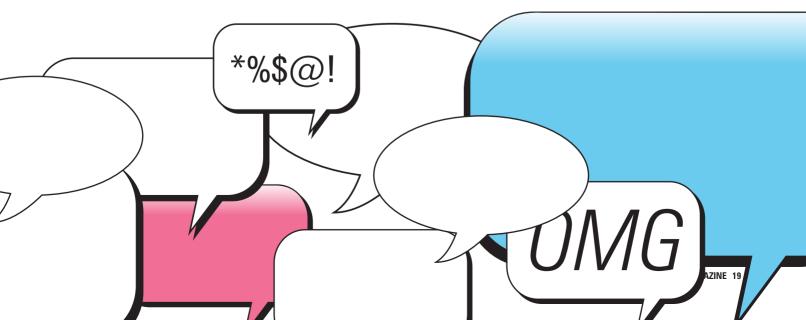
Jeremiah Owyang, an industry analyst with the Altimeter Group, closely follows the rise of what he calls "social media crises," or issues that arise in — or are amplified by — social media, and result in negative mainstream media coverage, a change in business process or financial loss.

Not only have such issues been on the rise since the early aughts, but, according to Owyang: "We found that 76 percent of these crises could have been prevented or diminished had the brand been prepared and had proper training, staff and processes to respond."

Crises aside, everyone agrees that social holds promise for most brands.

"Once brands stop thinking about social as a way to revolutionize marketing, they can start evaluating consumer lifecycles, and figure out where social fits," explains Nate Elliott, an analyst at Forrester Research. "People look at social as a problem, but they need to look it as a solution to specific problems."

According to Elliott, Radio Shack recently displayed its social

smarts — first, by achieving reach with a TV campaign, and only then using social as a secondary reach tool. He also commended Sephora for supporting a lively community on Facebook, without ignoring that stores and branded Web sites offer more depth than a Facebook page ever can.

What Other Brands Are Getting It Right?

"I'm a big fan of brands that take a bold approach and bring new thinking to a typically staid category," notes Williamson at eMarketer. "U by Kotex is one of those brands. Lately it's been supporting a 'Ban the Bland Design Challenge' campaign, where it invites women — particularly young women, the target audience for this brand — to submit colorful designs for feminine pads and carrying cases for pads." The artwork has been extraordinary and the company says the engagement that the campaign has driven is outstanding."

Looking abroad for inspiration, Fou points to TNT's launch in Belgium. "They made a video ad that went viral. It worked because the ad itself conveyed the key value proposition of TNT — drama — and it was funny, memorable and share-worthy." As a result, it hit some 30 million views within two weeks of launch.

Thinking bigger, Fou notes that a winning social media strategy will soon require brands to unify their efforts across channels. It is "what I call 'unified marketing,' which goes beyond 'integrated marketing,'" he says. "Marketers should determine on a case-by-case basis what is working for them in both traditional and digital channels, and ensure those tactics are synergized and reinforce each other."

Adds Fou: "Obviously this is all rooted in being able to measure everything and then to compare apples to apples and finally to make business decisions on how to optimize in order to drive biggest business impact."

That, however, is easier said than done. In fact, most would agree that insufficient channel measurement remains social marketing's biggest barrier to growth.

"Marketers know that counting fan 'likes' and followers is not the best way to measure success in social media marketing," according to Williamson. "But these metrics are often the top benchmarks for performance. It's no surprise, then, that a majority of marketers believe they cannot measure social media campaigns effectively. Compounding matters, marketers are overwhelmed with data; too often, they are gathering data because they can, not because the numbers are meaningful to what they are trying to accomplish."

Williamson adds that this issue is critical to the budgeting question because measurement goes hand-in-hand with spending. In a mid-2011 survey of marketers and agencies by the Pivot Conference, 42 percent of respondents said showing ROI was a significant obstacle, directly ahead of budgeting (34 percent) and getting executives to sign off on plans (27 percent).

No doubt, "marketers love metrics, and social still struggles to provide uniform measurement across platforms," says Lou Kerner, founder of the Social Internet Fund, which invests in social media companies but doesn't own any Facebook shares.

Notes Owyang at the Altimeter Group: "The general lack of measurement success has been a hindrance to the social marketing space, as efforts are often measured off domain, where Web analytics are not tracking, and engagement often doesn't lead directly to conversion numbers."

If they didn't already know it, Owyang adds: "Social marketers must be prepared to demonstrate … what was achieved, how, and why."

Perhaps on par with social's quantitative limitations, brand exposure remains a huge hurdle for marketers to overcome.

"Being in social media means giving up control," according to Martin and Wion at McDonald's. "But you can't just give up control and hope for the best; you have to have contingency plans in place.

"When critics tried to hijack [#McDStories], we quickly switched to #MeetTheFarmers and the negative chatter subsided within minutes," Martin and Wion note. "As one of the most talked-about brands, we take great care to craft our social programs to minimize risk of attack from critics, but our primary focus will always be on fans and engaging with customers."

Bitterman at Digitas likens social marketing to stand-up comedy.

"Doing stand-up has always been considered a very naked profession," he explains. "You're out there on your own: It's just you, your audience and whatever jokes and comebacks you brought with you when you went on stage. In social marketing, brands also have to be ready for anything."

That said, "Building trust and being authentic are critically important because, without it, the brand is subjecting itself to ridicule the likes of which could turn off an audience and have them head for the doors," Bitterman adds. "Find your center and maintain it."

While no brand can claim to have mastered the medium, Williamson doesn't see that as any reason to avoid social media. "Social media is constantly evolving and marketers must stay on top of trends and new services, and look for opportunities to capitalize," she says. "These opportunities often come up quickly, so marketers must have streamlined processes in place to make quick decisions." Ⓜ

> "DOING STAND-UP HAS ALWAYS BEEN CONSIDERED A VERY NAKED PROFESSION... IT'S JUST YOU AND YOUR AUDIENCE AND WHATEVER JOKES AND COMEBACKS YOU BROUGHT WITH YOU... IN SOCIAL MARKETING, BRANDS ALSO HAVE TO BE READY FOR ANYTHING..."
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CAN PINS BUILD BRANDS?

And other questions from the wild ride of Pinterest **BY JOHN CAPONE**

Some marketers have vented their frustrations with a seemingly fickle audience constantly chasing its own (long) tail.

Fatigue sets in.

"It looks like every couple of weeks, some new social media channel tackles the world, and is rewriting history," wrote Danny Devriendt, executive vice president and digital & social media strategist, EMEA at Porter Novelli back in March, before ticking off the exhausting list: "MySpace. Google Wave. Facebook. Twitter. Google+. Foursquare. Gowalla. Quora. Pinterest. Yammer. Path. Heatmap. Instagram. Yelp."

It wasn't the specter of having to navigate yet another new social tool that had gotten to Devriendt. No. "I have nothing against Pinterest," he told *MEDIA*. The panting overreactions of his brethren to the latest shiny new toy coming down the never-ending conveyer belt had driven Devriendt to exasperation. "Every couple of weeks we go through the hype cycle of yet another network, yet another way of sharing content and precious pieces of highly private lives. It's a bit like the Beatles coming to town: giggles, groupies, T-shirts and lots of screaming."

By now you can probably recite Pinterest's numbers and factoids — both hyperbolic and very, very real — by heart: fastest growing social network; more than 10 million users a month (and climbing exponentially) at last count. An audience that causes marketers to cackle like Mr. Burns on *The Simpsons* — 60-70 percent female, 50 percent Millennial, 50 percent with children, annual household income of $100,000. Four percent of all traffic on the Web comes from Pinterest. Refers more traffic than Google+, LinkedIn and YouTube *combined*.

Yes, to Mr. Devriendt's point, Pinterest is bigger than Jesus. And until the Facebook IPO, just about all anyone in the digital space could talk about.

For all its much-lauded ease of use and simplicity, Pinterest and its meteoric rise have left many scratching their heads. But the unbridled exuberance of some marketers led Porter Novelli's Devriendt to fume, "Pinterest is not a strategy," and pound out the admonition on his keyboard.

In February, Forrester's Darika Ahrens similarly cautioned marketers, and told them to all but ignore Pinterest for the time being, writing, "There's no denying

YOU CAN EXPECT TO HEAR "PINTEREST FOR BLANK" AS OFTEN IN THE NEXT YEAR AS YOU'VE HEARD "PANDORA FOR BLANK" OVER THE PAST COUPLE, AND MANY OF THESE CLONES WILL BE RIPPING OFF PINTEREST'S VISUAL APPROACH AS MUCH AS ITS CONCEPTUAL ONE

that Pinterest is fun, looks great, and a lot of people love playing with it. That is also true of kittens but no one's rushing to include them in their 2012 marketing plans."

Pinterest is not a strategy. It's true. But it also isn't a kitten (though you can find plenty of pictures of them there). Ever since it became the nitro-burning funny car of audience reach, it's been the job of every digital marketer and online professional to figure out how the Pinterest piece fits into their larger strategies.

Stifling efforts has been the closed nature of the company itself. There's no Pinterest API — well, there is, but it's zealously guarded and the company refuses to release it, supposedly internally citing Twitter's API "trouble." (Nobody at Pinterest would speak to *MEDIA* at all — about anything, not even kittens — for this article.)

When noted social media analyst (or, as he calls himself, "social media scientist") Dan Zarrella approached Pinterest asking for limited access to the API for research purposes, he was told basically, he says, "to go pound sand." Lacking access to the API he did the next best thing: painstakingly assembling together, pin-by-pin, the pieces of it he could access through Bing's cache. From a dataset of 11,000 random pins, Zarrella was able to draw some initial conclusions.

One of his findings is that taller images are more repinnable. The average number of repins spikes dramatically when the height of the image approaches 800 pixels, and the rate is very low for those under 400 pixels. This is fairly intuitive — anyone who's looked at the array of blocky images on Pinterest knows that wide images just don't work, but it's nice to see breakdowns of repins correlated to pixels nonetheless.

And we had better get used to dealing with these sorts of parameters on content. Jason Amunwa of objective-

based Web design and consulting firm Digital-Telepathy says that the way people visually digest information on Pinterest — and that there have been so many of them processing so much of it so quickly —"shows that the 'masonry' layout is ready for prime time among mainstream Web users, where the emphasis is on visually pleasing tiles of content, instead of pages." Amunwa points to the design direction of the new Windows 8 Metro interface, as well other content-curation sites such as CircleMe — one of what is sure to be part of a very, very long line of services encroaching on the territory of the Royal Pindom. Other pretenders to the throne include Gentlemint (Pinterest for guys), SparkRebel (Pinterest for fashion), Chill (Pinterest for videos) and littlemonsters.com (Pinterest for Lady Gaga). In fact, you can expect to hear "Pinterest for blank" as often in the next year as you've heard "Pandora for blank" over the past couple, and many of these clones will be ripping off Pinterest's visual approach as much as its conceptual one.
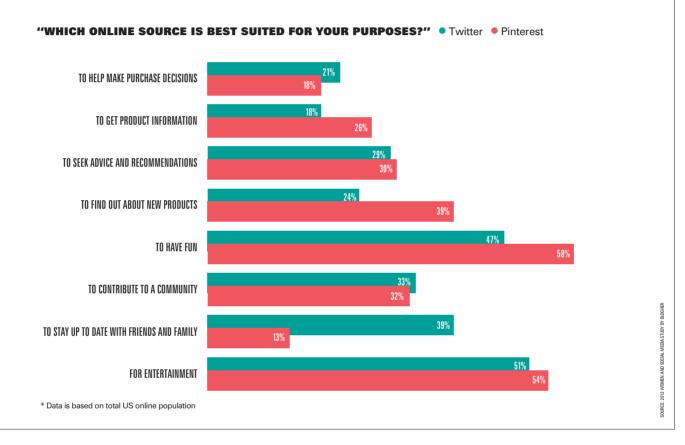
Yes, this all may drive Danny Devriendt to purchase a large semi-automatic weapon.

Brevity may be the soul of wit, but there are limits. Zarrella determines from his data set that descriptions of about 200 characters, which basically align with a tweet length, are most repinnable. Images with little or no description and descriptions longer than 350 words do not perform well at all when it came to repins, though Zarrella concedes that there could be other factors not accounted for affecting these rates. Again, though probably no surprise to those who watch Pinterest, the most repinnable words (the word most often included in the description of repins) relate to food. In fact, nearly all the top 10 words could conceivably be related to food (these include "cheese," "bake," "cake" and "chicken"). "Recipe" is the most repinned word.

Zarrella also found a much greater correlation between likes and repins than between comments and repins (a .87 Pearson's correlation versus .55). This

PINTEREST V. TWITTER: THE FUN FACTOR

Each year the BlogHer network surveys its predominately female readership to find out how and why they use social media. "With Pinterest, it's a really interesting, and quite blog-y, set of motivations. People are having fun with Pinterest," says Elisa Camahort Page, cofounder and COO of BlogHer. "They're finding it relaxing and entertaining … but also it's a discovery engine and it generates ideas. They get ideas about products, recipes and things to do."

"WHICH ONLINE SOURCE IS BEST SUITED FOR YOUR PURPOSES?" ● Twitter ● Pinterest

Purpose	Twitter	Pinterest
TO HELP MAKE PURCHASE DECISIONS	21%	18%
TO GET PRODUCT INFORMATION	18%	26%
TO SEEK ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS	29%	30%
TO FIND OUT ABOUT NEW PRODUCTS	24%	39%
TO HAVE FUN	47%	58%
TO CONTRIBUTE TO A COMMUNITY	33%	32%
TO STAY UP TO DATE WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY	39%	13%
FOR ENTERTAINMENT	51%	54%

* Data is based on total US online population

adds credence to and explicates a larger theory of Zarrella's: that greater engagement and discussion doesn't always equal greater reach. The most controversial content is often the most commented upon, yet not the most shared. In the case of Pinterest, this is clearly true.

RJMetrics took a slightly different tack in its independent analysis of Pinterest data, downloading and analyzing the complete pinning histories of random users on which it conducted a cohort analysis. This analysis found that Pinterest had an attrition rate of zero, which would only be possible if no one who started using it ever stopped, or, more likely, if existing users increased their activity enough to make up for anyone who left. "Pinterest is doing a really good job of retaining its users, and develops very fanatical users at a very good percentage of the people who come through the door," says Robert Moore, founder and CEO of RJMetrics. "What's really driving this very high retention rate is the fact that there's a meaningful subset of the population that becomes hooked and continues to use Pinterest month-to-month not just consistently, but increasingly. So much so that it's potentially counterbalancing any churn of people who were just there out of curiosity and didn't stick around."

The explosion in growth, or what looks like a sudden explosion, is actually a classic organic exponential growth story, according to Moore. Zoom out, and the curve looks like it's taken off over the past few months. But zoom into the previous few months, and it's going to look exactly the same, only the scale has changed, like a fractal image. "You go from two people to four to 16, and you keep squaring it, and the curves are going to look like this," he says. "I think they've done an exceptional job of making the incremental user just as likely as the previous user to share through their existing social networks. And a really high percentage of that sharing ends up getting consumed and converted into new users."

NICE PINS: BRANDS USING PINTEREST WELL

Zappos: HapPINess
Zappos launched itself onto Pinterest in its typical customer-first fashion, asking people to create pinboards around Zappos products (with the lure of gift cards as prizes). In one contest people were asked to create pinboards of at least 12 zappos.com items that make them happy (the contest was called, on point and on brand, "Zappos. com HapPINess Sweeps"), and in another, people were

tasked with creating pinheads of themselves wearing or modeling Zappos products.
"That's something that's unique," says Jason Hennessey, CEO of EverSpark Interactive. "It's interesting and tagging onto a fad, and people enjoy it."

Saveur: **Pin Your Dream Dinner Party**
Saveur took one of the most savvy approaches to Pinterest we've seen yet, mobilizing its

readers and fans via a contest executed on Pinterest. Letting consumers do on Pinterest, well, what they like to do: Pinterest.
The effort hit on all cylinders, motivating users to create their own boards exploring and demonstrating their dream dinner parties visually, and provided support to network all the consumer-generated boards (and, of course, link them all back to *Saveur*'s Pinterest board and saveur.com). Et *violà*! PINdemonium ensued.

ASPCA: Adoptable Animals Board
The national APSCA, as well as local regional chapters (and some other pet-rescue organizations), have taken to Pinterest to find homes for their charges. It's almost like Pinterest was made for this.

Adorable animal pictures + share-happy viral community platform — good will — great success.
"It's amazing," says Elisa Camahort Page, cofounder and COO of BlogHer. "It's very driven by the image. Which it should be, being on Pinterest. It's very real time. If you want to take action, there's action, and it kind of leverages how much we like cat pictures. It's got all the ingredients." **JC**

While social in nature, Pinterest might not actually be a social network per se, in that it is not yet really creating meaningful connections between users. Moore says Pinterest is something akin to an unsanctioned Facebook app, away from all the noise of Facebook, but one that relies heavily on the social graph of Facebook and, to a lesser degree, Twitter. "To have something as powerful and well-adopted as Pinterest is," he says, "you kind of need to live in a different, completely independent domain where the content is consumed but also have some hooks into that social graph."

"In some ways, it doesn't really matter where the underlying graph is from. Facebook and Twitter are just proxies for real-life arrangements," says Mark Johnson, CEO of personalized social graph-powered appazine Zite (acquired by CNN in 2011). "If Pinterest is where people are going to share and talk and have fun, then Pinterest, in some sense, actually owns the graph more strongly

than Facebook at that point. Facebook becomes the plumbing."
"Pinterest is in an interesting position," concludes Moore. "It's a social curation platform."

There's some evidence that the company's growth is slowing. AppData, which monitors third-party apps and sites that interact with Facebook, says the number of Facebook-connected users has fallen in recent months, perhaps as much as 25 percent. Still, "every day it's continuing to reach critical mass," says Jason Hennessey, CEO of EverSpark Interactive. And it's using that mass to sustain itself with affiliate revenue. Pinterest uses Skimlinks technology to crawl all the images posted on the service back to their original sources and look for affiliate codes, then inserts its own tracking code "so that Pinterest is actually monetizing the traffic that it sends to these Web sites," says Hennessey. "It could become one of the

largest affiliate sites on the Web in a very short period of time."
The use of Skimlinks alarmed some users, as has Pinterest's somewhat blasé attitude toward copyright and fair use. "We're at this moment in time where there are some terms and policies that need to be tightened up," says BlogHer's Elisa Camahort Page. "There are some bloggers who are concerned about how easy it is to really share not just copyrighted content, but so much content that you don't need to go visit the site." Also of concern to content producers, says Page, is the way Pinterest repurposes their content. "Where they're different from many other search and bookmarking sites is in enabling people to review full images within Pinterest and not have to leave to go see the full image." Though this fear of Pinterest locking people into the site would seem at odds with apparent plans to generate revenue from affiliate links.

To be clear, Pinterest is no danger from copyright lawsuits whatsoever. After

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reviewing Pinterest's latest posted Terms of Service and copyright policies, Derek Bambauer, a professor of law at Brooklyn Law School who specializes in intellectual property and Internet law, tells *MEDIA*, "Pinterest has complete protection as long as they stay within the DMCA safe harbor. Every UGC site survives based on that protection. The cost of DMCA compliance could be significant, but it can be automated almost entirely." As long as this is the case, any potential suits would be dismissed as soon as they came before a judge. "Pinterest would have to pay to defend initially," says Bambauer, "but most plaintiffs' lawyers know those suits aren't meritorious."

Page feels that Pinterest has a greater responsibility to bloggers and its users, though. "What it's trying to say, is 'Hey, we have no legal liability and the users have all the legal liability,' " she says. "Considering that its whole reason for being is that it's an image-sharing tool, that's a pretty cavalier attitude to have toward your users." To assuage some concerns, Pinterest did introduce a simple "no-pin" snippet of code so sites could opt-out, but in reality, not many sites are using it. At least, not those interested in getting traffic.

Pinterest and its many aforementioned hell-spawn and whatever follows them through the gates are surely becoming a part of the digital ecosystem, and trying to banish them would be like a farmer trying to banish microbes from his soil. Both can be beneficial, of course.

One way Pinterest can be beneficial to marketers, besides the obvious targeted referral traffic it generates, is that, "you're getting SEO value from the links you're continuing to build on Pinterest," says EverSpark's Hennessey. Each of those shares that links back to your site is another pathway for search ranks to take into account. In a bit of circular logic, your rank on Pinterest and how likely people are to come across your content are also controlled by an algorithm. "The more times people click on images and start pinning them, the more popular they become. Unlike Twitter where if seven people retweet your tweet, in another 20 minutes it's still gone," says Hennessey.

"It's kind of like Google in a sense, where the more popular your images become the more visible they become over time. So if the images stay popular, they'll have a much longer lifespan."

There are other ways well beyond this that the data and metadata generated by Pinterest-like services can become useful. It can play a role in reordering and defining all the content on the Web by adding an extra layer of metadata.

One of the major drawbacks to the near-utopian dream of a semantic Web has always been that it somehow asks that all this metadata be added to existing and future content. "A definition doesn't necessarily come from an intense tentacled description of something; it comes from usage," says Mark Johnson. "And that's where many of the algorithms that have made a lot of money, like the Google search algorithm, have succeeded. There were no extra semantics that Google put onto the Web. It was actually the internal structure of the Web that made the algorithm so powerful."

The next step could be in further defining the millions of bits of content we produce every day through, as Johnson suggests, usage. "If you can encourage people in ways that are fun to add a lot of metadata to the Web, then you probably have something there. The challenge is mining it," he says. "Pinterest is, in fact, adding a ton of metadata to a swath of the Web that never really got a lot of it. You imagine that there would have been enough metadata on pictures already that you could have done something Pinterest-y with it. Though it's really about drawing things together with a human editorial eye."

A smudge pot — used by farmers since the 1930s to heat their fields when crops are in danger from frost — is generally a diesel-burning rusted hunk of tin that looks like it dropped off a World War I battlefield. There are many of these in the area where I live, and I find their rust patterns and dents visually interest-

ing, so I created a pinboard full of images of them. Now, other Pinterest users come to the board and repin that content, and when they do they add their own descriptions and tags. One, placed on a badly banged-up smudge pot slouching in a field, caught my eye: "Lovely."

A million monkeys typing tags on that image for a million years might never come up with that, but it somehow fits. Posits Johnson: The "Google for social media" that uses the social layers of data overlaid on content and filters and organizes our modern world, might make serious hay of this sort of human element.

He offers the example of the classic linguistics problem of figuring out humor and sarcasm through algorithms. "It could be hundreds of years before we do that. On the other hand, it might happen very quickly … instead of having to read the documents themselves, suddenly you've got this extra data set that's being created out there. What looks like a hard computer science problem becomes a much easier problem if you look at all this metadata." Social streams and sharing tools, with their lolz and hahas are all providing a rich mix of metadata that, when layered on top of stories, could provide a more simple and straightforward solution than previously thought possible. ⓜ

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(NOT SO) MENACING MOBILE

Critics have been attacking new platforms since Plato. But is mobile more harmful than any other media?

BY ERIK SASS

As surely as technology evolves, technological change has always provoked complaints about its effects on human beings — and mobile devices are no exception. In a *New York Times* column titled "The Twitter Trap," published in May 2011, Bill Keller noted the latest mobile developments before confessing that "my inner worrywart wonders whether the new technologies overtaking us may be eroding characteristics that are essentially human: our ability to reflect, our pursuit of meaning, genuine empathy, a sense of community …"

More recently, in another essay in the same newspaper, titled "The Flight from Conversation," M.I.T. psychology professor Sherry Turkle similarly asserted that the new technology brings with it some kind of loss, a metaphysical price to be paid: "We live in a technological universe in which we are always communicating. And yet we have sacrificed conversation for mere connection."

But these concerns about media technology — that it will make us incoherent and superficial — are nothing new.

Take the examples cited by Turkle at the beginning of her column: "At home, families sit together, texting and reading email. At work, executives text during board meetings. We text (and shop and go on Facebook) during classes and when we're on dates. My students tell me about an important new skill: It involves maintaining eye contact with someone while you text

someone else; it's hard, but it can be done."

This damning paragraph can easily be rewritten, to similar effect, with the substitution of "analog" technologies or no technology at all: "At home, families sit together, [watching TV]. At work, executives [doodle] during board meetings. We [pass notes] during classes and [check stock prices on CNBC] when we're on dates. My students tell me about an important new skill: It involves [appearing to listen to someone while you read the newspaper]; it's hard, but it can be done."

Indeed, the handwringing over mobile's impact on the human psyche is merely the latest bout of our recurring, collective anxiety about our reliance on communications technology — a sense of unease that the way we communicate has some pernicious, hidden impact on our minds and souls. Essentially we fear that emphasizing one form of communication (textual, visual, auditory) causes our other faculties to atrophy, warping and diminishing our ability to think. But this supposed relationship between communication and cognition — which can be traced all the way back to ancient times, and reemerges with every new technology — is probably overstated.

In retrospect, the first device that fit our modern conception of mobile technology was probably the Sony Walkman, introduced in 1979, and the various knockoffs it inspired in following years. Critics immediately became fixated on the idea that people listening to the device were "cut off" from the world around them and isolating themselves in an antisocial way. Others said the Walkman would shorten attention spans by allowing young peo-

ple to switch back and forth between external stimuli and music; educators recommended that parents not allow children to listen to a Walkman while doing their homework, and the device was banned (mostly unsuccessfully) by many public schools.

As with other new communication technologies, of course, the Walkman was also said to be contributing to the decline of culture and society. In his 1987 book *The Closing of the American Mind*, conservative cultural critic Allan Bloom complained that the archetype of the modern era was "a 13-year-old boy sitting in the living room of his family home doing his math assignment while wearing his Walkman headphones or watching TV." Indeed, devices like the Walkman were atomizing American public life and undermining the influence of high culture: "As long as he has the Walkman on, he cannot hear what the Great Tradition has to say. And after its prolonged use, after he takes it off, he finds he is deaf." At the extreme, the device became a symbol of nihilism: Jean Baudrillard wrote that "nothing evokes the end of the world more than a man running straight ahead on a beach, swathed in the sounds of his Walkman …"

Before the Walkman, the main object of criticism was television, which was blamed, among other things, for shortening attention spans, hobbling our linguistic abilities, and, in essence, making us stupid. In this view, rational, language-based thought was being undermined by the simple, seductive pull of visual perception. Neil Postman, the author of *Amusing Ourselves to Death,* wrote that "excessive immersion in nonlinguistic, analogic symbols will have the effect of amplifying the functions of the right hemisphere while inhibiting the functions of the left … such people would be strong on intuition and feeling, but weak on reflection and analysis … in other words, people whose state of mind is somewhat analogous to that of a modern-day baboon."

Postman further warned that TV, as a primarily visual medium, "stresses the fragmented and discrete nature of events, and, indeed, is structurally unable to organize them into coherent themes and principles." At a more basic level, the regular interruption of TV by advertising was said to be "shortening attention spans," supposedly resulting in children being unable to learn or even carry out simple tasks. Complaints about the alleged coarsening effect of violent and sensational TV content are so well known they don't need to be repeated here.

TV's heavily visual aspect was condemned as incompatible with rational, analytical thought — but many of the same basic critiques were previously levied against a non-visual medium: radio. In 1927, H.G. Wells wrote that radio was fit only for "very sedentary persons living in badly lighted houses or otherwise unable to read … and who have no capacity for thought or conversation." Radio was widely condemned as a "dangerous rival" to reading, which would encourage illiteracy and cause attention spans to shrink, thanks to the prevalence of 15-minute-long radio dramas and even shorter pieces of music. By encouraging people to spend time alone or silently with others, the British critic F.R. Leavis also said radio was causing people to lose touch with the art of conversation (this was in addition to the usual battery of complaints that radio, like movies before and TV after, was undermining society with violent, vulgar content).

Before radio, of course, came movies — first silent, then "talkies," but always a visual medium. Here, again, cultural critics remarked on the power of sight, sound and motion relative to other media. In *Our Movie Made Children*, a much-cited study published in 1935, Henry James Forman wrote: "Pictures, as the investigators point out, have two means of reaching the human consciousness, both the visual and the auditory. How indirect, by comparison, is the medium of books!"
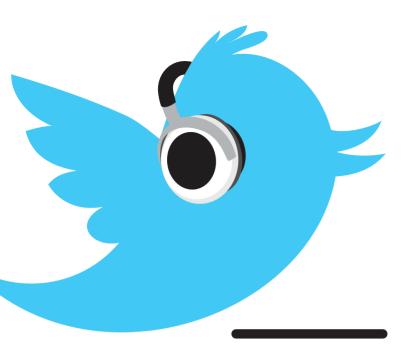
As the title of Forman's book indicates, critics were particularly concerned with the impact of movies on children, which supposedly extended to physiological phenomena including disturbed sleep patterns and insomnia, resulting, in turn, in "emotional instability … similar to the effects produced by alcohol, cocaine, heroin, hashish and other narcotics …" Furthermore, "sleep impairment following the movies" was held to be "detrimental to health and growth." Again, these cognitive and psychological effects were attributed to movies without reference to their content, which was separately (and vociferously) criticized for undermining the fundamental values of civilization.

Based on these complaints about modern media, we might assume (as many of critics still do) that textual communication is the gold standard — the original medium, perfectly attuned to the human mind. But in the 19th century. the same kind of accusations were levied against the medium which is venerated today as the most sober and substantial of them all: newspapers. In 1865, E.L. Godkin, the famed editor of *The Nation* and *the New York Evening Post*, condemned popular newspapers for their impact on ordinary Americans: "They like 'light stories,' 'pleasing anecdotes,' and would like to have all the great questions of the time disposed of in at most half a column … [This] … gives one a tolerably fair idea of the influence of the daily press upon them."

In 1890, Godkin was still fulminating against popular newspapers for their supposed effects on the American attention span: "Now, nothing can be more damaging to the habit of continuous attention than newspaper-reading … it never requires the mind to be fixed on any topic for more than three or four minutes, and … every topic furnishes a complete change of scene. The result for the habitual newspaper-reader is a mental desultoriness, which ends by making a book on any one subject more or less repulsive."

The perfect form of communication, to Godkin, was books — thoughtful, weighty, requiring long periods of concentration. And yet books themselves have been criticized for their supposedly negative effect on the human mind. No less an authority than Plato, the original social conservative, complained (through his protagonist Socrates) that reading caused the faculty of memory to atrophy, and gave readers the false impression they are learning when in fact true knowledge existed only in the soul. In Plato's dialogue titled Phaedrus, Socrates tells the story of the ancient Egyptian inventor of writing, whose invention was criticized by the pharaoh: "… it will introduce forgetfulness into the soul of those who learn it: They will not practice using their memory because they will put their trust in writing … you provide your students with the appearance of wisdom, not with its reality."

So how real is the supposed impact of communications technology on human beings? It seems strange to have to defend literacy again Plato (who was, of course, fully aware of the irony

involved in writing a critique of writing). While reading and writing may indeed lead us to neglect our memory, only a small group of people were ever able to cultivate massive memories in the first place (e.g., medieval monks who built "memory palaces" full of thousands of texts). By contrast, reading and writing allow vastly more people to participate in the life of the mind and the world around them. This broadening of the information franchise has spurred endless technological, social and economic development, while humanity has accumulated a vast store of collective knowledge in libraries and now the Internet.

Beginning in the 18th century, popular newspapers — highbrow and lowbrow alike — helped disseminate important, relevant information (alongside sensational trash) to large numbers of people. They were key in the development of democratic institutions from the Revolutionary period onward, and have also left behind a massive archive of text and images that continues to be useful. While Godkin condemned popular newspapers after the U.S. Civil War for their inaccurate sensationalism, the most popular newspaper during the conflict, *Harper's Weekly*, was widely valued at the time for its evenhandedness, and today is an invaluable resource for historians and other scholars. Sensational newspapers can still contribute to the national conversation, as the *National Enquirer* demonstrated with its reporting on the John Edwards affair.

Whatever concerns parents, educators and doctors may have had about movies from the 1930s onward, they have been viewed by most of the U.S. population, including children, ever since without producing any readily apparent ill effects. It's true

> "AS LONG AS HE HAS THE WALKMAN ON, HE CANNOT HEAR WHAT THE GREAT TRADITION HAS TO SAY. AND AFTER ITS PROLONGED USE, AFTER HE TAKES IT OFF, HE FINDS HE IS DEAF."
>
> ALLAN BLOOM,
> *THE CLOSING OF THE AMERICAN MIND*, 1987

children have nightmares following some kinds of movies, and parents have to be vigilant about the content their children see, but a roundup of recent research on the relationship between media exposure and childhood sleep disorders (a prime concern about movies in the 1930s) by the Kaiser Family Foundation concluded: "One of the striking insights to emerge … is that there is nothing inherent in most media use that would make it damaging for sleep."

Of course, the fears about radio promoting illiteracy among children and young adults turned out to be wholly unfounded: From 1910 to 1950 — radio's golden age — the U.S. literacy rate actually increased from 92 percent to 97 percent, with children leading the way. Interestingly radio is now seen as a valuable tool for spreading literacy in developing countries with little or no public education: In Afghanistan, the U.S. Army has been distributing hand-crank radios with literacy workbooks to villagers so they can learn to read at home (part of a broader strategy to undermine the Taliban's control of news and opinion).

Television, the bogeyman of cultural critics during the second half of the 20th century, is a somewhat easier target, as increased TV viewing has, in fact, been correlated with shorter attention spans in some children. (The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no TV for children under age 2, and no more than two hours of quality programming for older kids.)

But as with other media, this negative impact probably has more to do with the type of content viewed than anything intrinsic to the medium itself. Dr. Dimitri Christakis, a pediatrician at Seattle Children's Hospital who led several much-cited studies, commented in 2011: "Most parents worry too much about how much TV their children watch and not enough about what they watch. It's not about turning the TV off. It's about changing the channel." As for TV's broad impact, there are few reliable longitudinal studies over time, but what little evidence there is suggests average attention spans today are roughly the same — about 10 minutes for 4-year-olds, 20 minutes for adults — as they were in the first half of the 20th century.

Returning to the present, it's true the latest wave of mobile media technology differs from previous waves in its interactivity: We aren't just reading text or watching video or listening to music, but sending text messages, playing mobile games, sharing video with friends, and the like. But it's not clear why active, "lean-forward" behavior would be any more damaging to our cognitive abilities or attention spans than earlier media: Indeed, traditional media like movies, radio, and TV were often criticized for encouraging passive consumption, which may be less when prevalent when there are interactive options offered by the same device.

No doubt, certain activities — texting while driving, "sexting," compulsive socializing, addictive consumption of any kind of media — can be dangerous and bad for your health. It was never a good idea to let kids watch TV all day long before, and it's not a good idea to let them, say, watch mobile video or play mobile games or goof off on Facebook all day long now. Other (adult) behaviors are just rude: People should consider turning off their mobile devices so they don't get sucked into reading the news or texting at dinner. But as in previous eras, it would be foolish and irresponsible to blame technology for the uses we make of it. Ⓜ

MINING MOBILE'S LOCAL MOTION

They may be global, but marketers can't quite catch up with consumers' passion for local BY TOM MACISAAC

In many quarters, 2012 has been dubbed the year of mobile. According to a 2012 Nielsen report[1], smartphone penetration in the U.S. has exceeded 50 percent and is poised to rise even further as the technology improves. Just like every new technological platform that attracts a critical mass of consumers, mobile has experienced its fair share of the inevitable growing pains in monetization with advertisers that every nascent medium goes through. However, I think brands and agencies know there is great, and largely untapped, value in mobile advertising, and an engaged audience — expecting media and technology to tangibly improve their lives — is waiting to connect.

THE CASE FOR LOCATION-BASED MOBILE

Location-based mobile advertising represents the ultimate actualization of this opportunity. With the growing level of sophistication and wizardry behind the modeling and the technology, publishers are now capable of offering premium, brand-safe content that is sticky with consumers. And with publishers increasingly ramping up their capabilities in offering video and tablet inventory, advertisers are beginning to see the power of the platform in engaging their target audiences in a deeper, more resonant manner.

The number of people who are consuming video content on mobile devices is increasing rapidly. Tablet ownership is up 282 percent, and ereader ownership is up 129 percent compared to this time last year, according to recent 2012 comScore data[2]. Logically, consumers are more apt to tap on mobile ads that provide value than those that don't. It stands to reason that location-awareness is a proven driver in higher click-through rates as compared to campaigns that aren't location-aware.

Our surveys at Verve have convincingly confirmed this notion. The ability to hyper-target consumers locally is especially vital in the marketing plans of brands in the retail, automotive and QSR verticals. For example, over 80 percent of people on the Verve Network said they would be open to receiving mobile ads promoting their local dealerships if they were offered an incentive for test-drives of new vehicles as a part of the messaging.

Dynamic, *geo-fenced* campaigns are starting to catch on with marketers, too. An advertiser may want to drive traffic to a store location for a weekend sale, so ads are only served to people within a pre-determined radius of that store location, and nobody outside of that parameter will receive those ads.

Or if you're looking to cast a wider net, a brand can execute what in industry lingo is referred to as a *geo-aware* campaign. A brand could set location parameters to better target consumers of a general area. The technology exists where mobile ad creative can be effectively adjusted based on regional weather forecasts or other criteria. Home Depot ads in the Pacific Northwest during rainstorms may remind consumers about their line of roofing and rain-gutter products, while simultaneously showing Miami consumers specials on patio furniture.

HOW DO WE SELL LOCATION-BASED MOBILE TO ADVERTISERS?

So the value proposition for location-based mobile would appear to be a simple, elegant and powerful argument. What will it take to spark a level of commitment from advertisers commensurate to the opportunity? Consumers currently spend 29 percent of their time in the mobile medium, yet the ad spend is only 1 percent vis-à-vis other media. This imbalance is due to a lot of things, and will close over time, but generally speaking it's about a lack of cohesive understanding of how mobile fits into the broader strategy.

It's also reasonable to figure that many brands are standing on the sidelines out of pure inertia and an aversion to risk and experimentation. We all know about the relatively short lifespan of CMOs at Fortune 500 companies, as well as the increasing encroachment of cost-cutting procurement people into the advertising allocation process within marketing organizations. Against this tough backdrop, the margin for error is razor-thin.

So how do publishers and mobile ad networks sell the proposition to brands and their agencies? Local media companies need to realize they are sitting at the epicenter of the entire "LoMo" phenomenon; 95 percent of smartphone users have searched for local information according to Google Mobile Playbook, April 2012.

And beyond relentlessly preaching the gospel of "test and learn" as a marketing imperative, we need to do what we can to give CMOs and their marketing people cover for these initiatives. The most sure-fire way to do that is by offering them case studies of how advertisers have successfully leveraged the location-based mobile platform and delivered upon predetermined KPIs. Ⓜ

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SEARCH MIXES IT UP

As marketers move to integrate media and combine data, engagement mapping and attribution models take center stage

BY LAURIE SULLIVAN

The integration of mapping systems and mobile phones will become the single most important search advancement in 2012. It will promote consumer loyalty for nearby businesses, and generate long-term advertising revenue and profits. As marketers continue to sign on to mobile advertising, companies in the U.S. will spend $2.61 billion on mobile advertising in 2012, up from $1.45 billion last year, according to eMarketer estimates. Search will own about $1.28 billion, up from roughly $653 million, respectively.
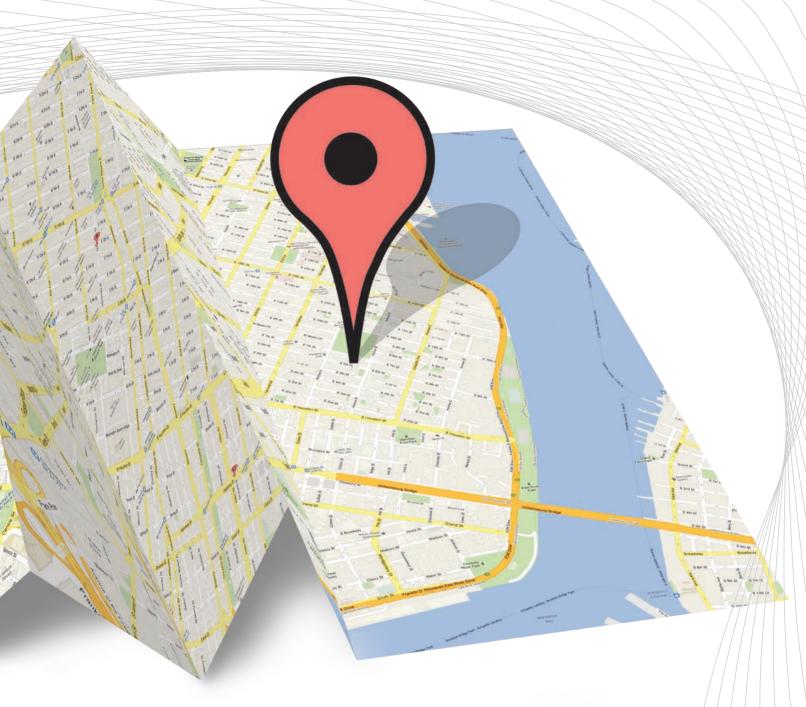
And eMarketer isn't the only research firm forecasting mobile growth. The Adobe Systems Global Digital Advertising Q1 2012 report released in April reveals U.S. marketers continue to increase mobile advertising budgets. In the first quarter

this year, U.S. marketers allocated 8 percent, and in the UK, 11 percent. Of this, tablets accounted for 4.25 percent of search spend. Tablet advertising investments will become more appealing to advertisers in the short term, because the cost per click (CPC) is lower compared to desktops, despite comparable conversion rates.

What did the search industry get right? For starters, mapping services and directories tied to mobile Web sites and applications — not only for retail stores, but down-the-street mom-and-pop grocery stores, towing services, dentists and insurance agents. Microsoft moved on its mobile strategy tying mapping apps to business directories. About half of smartphone and tablet owners use mobile apps to find information about local businesses, according to comScore.

Google latched on to mobile with GoMo, a service helping companies set up a mobile Web site and business plan, and set wheels in motion to acquire Motorola Mobility for $12.5 billion. It launched click-to-call phone numbers

in mobile ads, and video and image search. Some believe Microsoft did a better job at building image search, and forced the hand of Google to develop Google Goggles, a downloadable mobile image-recognition application for Android-operated devices.

Video and images have become an important piece of mobile, maps and directories for marketers. Rob Griffin, executive vice president and global director of product development at marketing agency Havas Digital, gives Bing a big nod for its image search. Google, he says, created the better algorithm, though the search experience is subpar.

Randy Wootton, senior vice president of sales and marketing at AdReady, left Microsoft in 2011, where he served as the vice president of global search and online marketplace. He calls the ability for marketers to own their brands' online presence "big." When asked for input on technology and strategies advancing search marketing, he points to pulling branded search terms into display ad campaigns.

The move to integrate marketing media combines silos of data, which led to engagement mapping and attribution models, as well as marketers owning the online presence of their companies' brands, and pulling branded search terms into display ad campaigns.

Engagement mapping lets marketers track click paths and conversion rates to determine the importance and success of each media tied to an advertising campaign. Marketers have reached a point where they must identify the sum of the parts and their contribution, not just individual media.

While the underbelly of search engines remains complex, the action of moving search to a smaller screen taught engines to become simplistic. Thomas Mueller, a global director of branding firm Siegel+Gale, believes Google offers a better user interface and experience on tablets. And it may just be the Web code is one-generation behind, he says, because the query results page appears cleaner and simpler.

Simplicity will become the buzz word this year. The trend

became obvious after considering recent missteps, as well as closures and new services introduced recently by Google, Microsoft, Yahoo and others.

THE MISSES

On June 1, Microsoft will shut down Bing 411, a search directory for businesses. It was created to compete with Google's GOOG-411 service. Both companies failed to monetize their free listing service with advertisements. Google shut its service last year. Microsoft admits the service was designed at a time when few people had the option to access Bing through smartphones and other connected devices. Since then, the world has changed considerably.
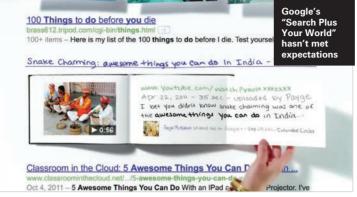

Google's "Search Plus Your World" hasn't met expectations

ad platform gain substantial adoption and come closer to reducing the gap with Google.

Without failure, success seems impossible. Google's digital marketing evangelist Avinash Kaushik once told MediaPost the Internet creates an experimental platform for online advertising, because failure can quickly turn into success through near real-time optimization techniques. Few technology platform providers have successfully combined search engine optimization (SEO) and paid search campaigns, but integrating search queries and social content has been doubly challenging.

Google's "Search Plus Your World" has not met expectations, the search experience on Facebook remains clumsy and awful, and Bing's integration of Facebook's social graph seems shallow and not yet valuable, according to Aaron Goldman, chief marketing officer at Kenshoo. And while industry tech geeks continue to try to combine search and social campaigns, brands and publishers still struggle with the strategy, says Goldman.

Since early last year, Google closed several products to focus on social and mobile apps and advertising. Among them: Aardvark, Desktop, Fast Flip, Maps API for Flash, Google Pack, Google Web Security, Image Labeler, Sidewiki, Buzz, Code Search, iGoogle social features and Jaiku.

Early in May, Yahoo released a dashboard for small-and-medium-size businesses. As part of the offerings, a new directory service allows SMBs to monitor information about their company across the Web. It relies on the Yahoo directory as a template for information. A tab in the dashboard monitors local business listings based on the description. It ties in with Yelp and Yahoo Local, but it's not clear whether it connects with Yahoo Maps.

Search engine marketing remains difficult for SMBs. The high failure rate based on complex platforms, and large debt and small margin for error keeps companies from investing. In May, Microsoft released a redesign of its search engine Bing. It also rebranded Microsoft Advertising for SMBs to — Bing, powered by Bing and Yahoo — in an attempt to make it less confusing for proprietors or marketers at small businesses who typically go to Bing's home page and click on the "Advertise here" button to sign up.

The adoption of mobile phones and local search tools brought a heightened awareness for the need to better support SMBs. It took years for Microsoft execs to simplify the ad-buying process in adCenter. They had to "dumb-down the process and put all the complexities behind the curtain," according to a former Microsoft exec. Not until then will the

Consumers continually turn toward social connections to search for recommended brands, products, locations and more. A panel of Florida Gulf Coast University seniors took the stage at the MediaPost Search Insider Summit in April to explain how they use social media, search and mobile devices. Edelman account supervisor Michelle Prieb explored with the students how the next-generation consumer and professional makes social media part of their everyday lives.

Ironically, the Florida Gulf Coast University students asked for one dashboard to connect social and search platforms. Microsoft has been experimenting with the integration of social and search, rethinking tools and rebuilding platforms. A proof-of-concept social-search engine called so.cl, designed from the ground up, tests the integration of search results in a social engine. It supports real-time social data and videos that integrate with search engine commands to automatically populate pages and allow users to share information.

All this technology becomes meaningless unless companies get it right. Until platform and technology companies can better combine the search and social experience in the user interface for site visitors, all the back-end tools in the world will deliver substandard results.

THE CHALLENGES

Challenges run the gamut, from Google's decision to limit referring keyword data to site analytics tools while remaining committed to SEO transparency, to connecting silos of data and attributing the influence of media to the conversion or the final sale of the product or service.

Google's policy makes sense when it comes to protecting consumer privacy, but others believe it could present a conflict of interest. After all, the search company is appending query data to URLs sent to several Web sites. A savvy data aggregator can collect search-term information and sell the associated cookies to retarget consumers based on searches.

It also makes sense that Google would want to hold on to the valuable data, so they can do the targeting, rather than a third party. Marin Software vice president of marketing Matt Lawson says the question becomes how big will limits grow for logged-in users? Between 10 percent and 15 percent isn't a big deal, but if it becomes 30 percent, 40 percent or 50 percent, SEO marketers will lose a lot of visibility to activity across the Internet.

The same holds true for Facebook, Lawson says. Advertisers complain about the lack of tracking visitors from the click all the way through other actions on and off Facebook.

Visibility into data becomes paramount for attribution modeling. Drawing a solid white line connecting media will become one of this year's biggest challenges. It means developing methods, technologies and organizational strategies. Marketers will experiment with the amount of credit given to lower-funnel activities, such as search, to understand how offline activities, such as billboards or television and radio commercials, contribute to the sale.

At many companies, the practice of attribution begins with the need to understand the relationship between natural and paid search campaigns. But think of all the marketing channels driving consumers to the final goal, whether downloading a white paper or making a purchase. Often times the ones assisting in the process become more important than the final click getting all the credit.

There's also no shortage of emerging technologies and strategies. Omar Tawakol, CEO of BlueKai, an online data management marketing firm for marketers, ad networks and publishers, thinks about assigning attribution to behavioral data connected to paid search ads.

Marketers have begun to understand the benefits from integrating media, such as search and social. They realize consumers jump from search engines to social sites to product recommendations when researching products and services, continually toggling between social networks and search engines. For example, research from digital marketing agency Kenshoo reveals 22.5 percent of all online retail sales prompted by Facebook ad clicks in the conversion path include at least one click on a search advertisement.

Companies adopting attribution admit it offers the accountability that Internet marketing has promised for years, but not delivered. Indeed, 72 percent of marketers and agencies surveyed agree that attribution models enable bet-

UNTIL PLATFORM AND TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES CAN BETTER COMBINE THE SEARCH AND SOCIAL EXPERIENCE IN THE USER INTERFACE FOR SITE VISITORS, ALL THE BACK-END TOOLS IN THE WORLD WILL DELIVER SUBSTANDARD RESULTS

ter budget allocation across channels and better returns on investments, but findings from a study by Econsultancy and Google suggest the majority of marketers worldwide fail to use attribution models correctly — or even at all.

The study found that for most companies using attribution the strategy remains in the early stages, both from technology and organizational structure. Some 83 percent of the survey respondents have been engaged in the practice for less than two years, and 28 percent began in just the last six months. The technology is being used to determine what media attributed to the conversion, as well as policies and procedures within the company. Attribution is more than technology. It requires marketers to combine data collected from display, search, video, social and mobile ads. So, companies need to build or find through a third-party the databases and platforms that support this integration. Typically, within a company, these campaigns are managed by different people. The same person who manages a display ad campaign doesn't manage a search ad campaign. The two who do must learn how to share the data and work together to determine budgets. It means c-level execs need to rethink the organizational structure of the company.

Redefining organizational structures will become difficult for those at companies with rigid budget policies. At many organizations, attribution gets political. It requires marketers to redistribute budgets, if necessary, to understand the interplay of media channels. Changing the status quo is difficult, especially at organizations where compensation is tied to the size of budgets and bonuses.

Silos between channels also make it difficult to gain a cross-media perspective in digital. As companies deal with these complexities, their ability to customize channel weights within attribution methods becomes vital, so it is not surprising the study identifies a high percentage of marketers and agencies citing customization as an important attribution method. In fact, 41 percent of agencies cited customization by channel as important, compared to 25 percent of clients.

Although marketers continue to do their best to integrate digital and traditional channels, a significant measurement gap remains. The model requires data to get a good view into attribution and how the channels work together, such as an online digital and an offline branding campaign. Of those marketers with multichannel marketing and advertising programs, only 41 percent cite being able to better understand the interactions between digital and offline media, according to the Econsultancy and Google report. Ⓜ

For brands reaching out to Gen Y, video is ushering in a new Golden Age of creativity **BY SARAH MAHONEY**

STORYTELLING MAGIC

At this point, there's no argument that video is the snap, crackle and pop of the Internet. After all, comScore reports that 181 million U.S. Internet users are watching nearly 37 billion online videos per month, with video ads topping 8 billion for the first time on record.

But thinking that popularity is what makes video so important to marketers is missing the point entirely. The true power of video is that it's the primary communication channel for Gen Y, and for marketers that means video is the language of the future.

It's how Millennials want to consume content: A recent report from McKinsey finds that Americans under 35 are 1.5 times as likely to watch online video as older people, 1.8 times as likely to watch Internet videos on TV via connected devices, and 1.9 times as likely to video chat, which is now the preferred method of communication for college students.

But for marketers, that love has created a nightmare of clutter. YouTube alone estimates that 60 hours of video are uploaded every minute, and that in one month, more video is uploaded than the three major U.S. networks created in *60 years.*

THE 10 HOTTEST BRANDED VIDEOS

MEDIA asked Matthew Fiorentino, director of marketing for Visible Measures, a Boston-based analytics and advertising platform for social video, to count down the 10 most-viewed vids launched in the last year. In doing so, he reveals what takes a video from brand experiment to Internet sensation.

Kony 2012: This broke all the rules for what typically makes video campaigns go viral: It is long, serious and tragic. But what it does better than most campaigns is explicitly ask people to get involved — everyone who watched Invisible Children's documentary knew

that they were supposed to make Joseph Kony famous. People could easily and instantaneously right a horrible wrong by simply watching and sharing the video campaign. Every view and share was an attack against Kony. And after that view and share, we had done our part — Joseph Kony was more famous because of us. But what made this campaign truly take off was the visible endorsement by celebrities like Oprah, Justin Bieber and others with millions of followers on Twitter. These endorsements gave the campaign the visibility it needed to rise above the noise and catch the attention of enough people to make it spread like wildfire.

Introducing iPhone 4S: Apple is a very methodical advertiser. With every major new product release since the iPad 2, Apple releases two main creatives for its video campaign, a 30-second spot and a longer featurette with executives

We asked Angela Courtin, executive vice president of content and convergence at Aegis, to fill *MEDIA* readers in on what marketers can do to create videos that have the best shot at breaking through.

You've been at MySpace, MTV and now Aegis. What's been the biggest change in video?
Well, there's an incredible amount of distribution and an incredible amount of supply. There is much more access now to the technology needed to create premium content, in terms of HD and how inexpensive cameras have become, the ability to edit, even the ability to bring in talent.

Courtin

When you think about the talent now embracing short-form content in the digital space, it's not just YouTube stars.

It's people like Sarah Silverman, working for Juicy Fruit, right?
Exactly. Look at what Ileanna Douglas is accomplishing for IKEA, now in its fourth season. We get a lot of those calls now, of people representing talent, actors who are sitting around waiting for a pilot to start or a script to come along, and they want to work in the interim. They want to create content.

So if you think about access, demand, talent and audience, the convergence of those things has created a sizable opportunity to make money and create audience appeal. Those things were not there before.

It's a wonderful time for a brand to be involved in co-creation, or integration within content that's already been created.

What's the biggest difference between video and TV?
TV upfronts are so big because there is a limited window to get in and be a part of these shows. Can digital create that kind of necessity and closed-window environment? I don't think so because it's always on.

talking about the thinking that went into developing the new product. The 30-second spot typically gets coverage from many tech blogs and paid advertising on YouTube. This provides a solid foundation for each product launch. But what made *Introducing iPhone 4S* different was Siri. Siri adds a little magic to the iPhone — it's a technology that we haven't seen work this well at this scale. The newness of Siri inspired audiences to make copies and derivatives (video responses, mixes, mashups, spoofs, etc.) of the campaign, which have

driven the majority of the views for the campaign.

Angry Birds Space: Video games are a different animal than your typical video advertising campaign because they actually gain traction when the game releases instead of dying off. People get their hands on the game and look to the videos to learn tips and tricks. *Angry Birds Space* has benefited from this video game behavior, but then it also had huge media exposure, which generally featured trailers from the game. The campaign has two main trailers for the

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game. The first big trailer features a NASA astronaut talking about the game in a space shuttle and demonstrating the physics of the game by launching Angry Birds toys with a real slingshot in zero gravity. The second is an animated trailer showing how the *Angry Birds Space* story begins, complete with wormholes and the birds' transformations into their "space" versions, which feels very much like the beginning of a superhero movie.

M&M's Just My Shell: What makes this an interesting case is that more than 80 percent of the views for the campaign come from copies and derivatives. This means that audiences, not the brand, have driven over 35 million views for the campaign. There are over 260 copies of the ad across the Web, indicating a high level of endorsement and evangelism from fans of the campaign. It's the most-watched campaign from Super Bowl 2012.

But will it always be on? How many talking animal videos can we watch? Won't consumers get bored?

Not if the videos are good. It all comes down to quality. If you've got a great story and great characters, people will watch. And the platforms will be irrelevant. Stories can migrate from TV to a mobile screen, and back to TV.

So you don't think platforms matter?

It's about story and characters and brand. Those are my filters. If it's not a good story, it's not worth telling, no matter what platform or screen you are on. What is that insight we've garnered, in terms of human experience? Then we can ask, "Is that where they want to consume it? How they want to consume it? What is the right platform to bring that insight to life?"

Some of the most-watched videos are TV ads, and viewers don't know that — they never see them on TV. Does that make any difference?

The reason they get viewed so often is that they are compelling — they are great stories or funny characters. Look at what General Motors, a client, did with the Camaro. The son went and found his dad's Camaro from the '50s; they captured it in
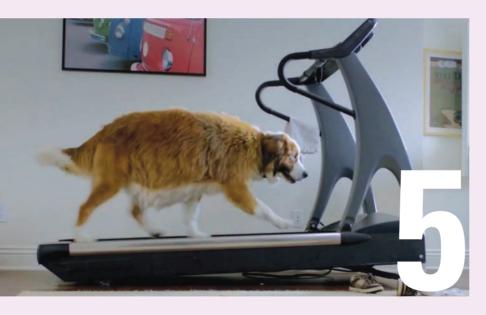
a 30-second spot. But if viewers searched for it online, they found a five-minute version.

In many ways, commercials can now be snapshots of longer stories, almost promotions for the longer film that is online. The lines are blurring. And vice versa — if something resonates online, can it be cut down to a 30-second spot? It resonates more if I see it on air, then search for it online. We're widening that aperture of exposure.

Which marketers are doing the best videos?

Marketers targeting Millennial consumers. Our clients Red Bull and Adidas are doing great work, both in long form and short form. In the competition, I think there's an amazing video called "Make It Count" from Nike. The branding is so minimal — he's wearing Nikes, but there's no product shot of the swoosh or anything. It just tells a great story: This guy takes $10,000 from Nike to make this film and goes around the world. It is great branded entertainment.

I think marketers using branded videos for reality programming are also fun. Diageo, another Aegis client, did a micro reality competition for Smirnoff. It was a dance contest and the winner got to go on tour with Madonna. So the company leveraged this

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VW's The Dog Strikes Back: After Volkswagen's success with "The Force" from Super Bowl 2011, there was extraordinary anticipation for its 2012 campaign. VW knew this and took advantage of it, releasing a teaser for the campaign that drove over 4 million views in two days. It followed the teaser with the real asset a few days before the game. In all, the campaign generated more than 15 million views before the game even began. VW followed the natural buzz and visibility of the Super Bowl with paid media for the campaign, which sustained it for a couple of weeks after the game. The biggest factor for the campaign was that VW had established itself as a major Super Bowl advertiser in 2011. This reputation drove the anticipation and subsequent interest in the new campaign.

Google's The Web Is What You Make of It: This is what makes the Web great. The campaign has numerous creatives that feature some of the biggest names and trends online, with assets from Lady Gaga and Justin Bieber. There's a creative that features Angry Birds. Another creative stars Dan Savage and spotlights the "It Gets Better" movement. The campaign also has a creative called "Dear Sophie," which shows a little girl growing up as her father

this considerable asset to build brand equity.

Smart marketers look at their portfolio of assets and say, "How can we create content experiences that exploit that?" That's the Holy Grail of video: bringing together things that already exist with new content.

Are marketers still afraid of video, this sense that a viral video could harm a brand?
It's less so. Marketers are more likely to understand that when you put your brand out there, consumers will want to manipulate it, in some ways good and in some ways bad. You have to prepare for both. And as brands see themselves as media producers, they have less fear, because they have more content out in the world.

As consumer sophistication grows, are they likely to be irritated as they realize that what they thought was a funny amateur video is actually a commercial?

> THAT'S THE HOLY GRAIL OF VIDEO: BRINGING TOGETHER THINGS THAT ALREADY EXIST WITH NEW CONTENT

There are plenty of consumers out there who enjoy transparency and authenticity, especially among Millennials. Coca-Cola has done a great video about what it wants to accomplish, and what it intends to do for its customers. And I think people who love cat videos won't mind knowing that a company like Friskies made it. It's something that's of value to me, as a consumer. We tell marketers they need to be more transparent about what they want in videos.

But let's be honest. More people have watched the video of Diet Coke exploding with Mentos than anything about its business model. And let's just say, for the sake of argument, that people who watched those videos actually thought Coca-Cola had produced them as a type of marketing? Or that McCormick was behind the latest cinnamon challenge craze?
Hmm. I think most young people would find it pretty cool if they thought Coke sponsored that — putting your brand in the position to get parents upset that you're teaching people how to explode things! And with the cinnamon, there are so few ways for brands to break through the noise. Brands don't have to be educational — they can be entertaining and inspirational. The

emails her pictures and videos (it resonates with new parents — I did the same thing for my baby daughter). Ultimately, *The Web Is What You Make of It* is all about good, popular content.

Dirt Devil's You Know When It's the Devil: This was done on spec by students at a German film school. The campaign took off because of the big twist at the end of the ad — up until this paradigm shift, the ad feels like a pure movie trailer. The surprising flip from horror film to vacuum ad surpassed audiences' expectations of the video, which gave it that magical quality it needed to be evangelized.

Procter & Gamble's New Old Spice Guy Fabio: Old Spice cracked the viral code in 2010 with its "Responses" campaign, creating a novel real-time brand interaction that drove urgency among audiences to get involved before it was too late, producing over 84 million views. The campaign published over 180 assets in 48 hours in response to audience questions from Twitter, Facebook and other social networks. *New Old Spice Guy Fabio* took the same approach. And, while it didn't generate the same amount of views as the original "Responses" campaign, 28.1 million views are still impressive.

more they can wrap around things I care about, the more likely I am to be a loyal consumer.

For a brand, that's the challenge: How do you find those things that enough people care about?

You make a great point. Moms are probably looking for how-to cooking videos with cinnamon in them; teens are looking for cinnamon videos to make them throw up on camera. Is it OK for marketers to use a completely different tone of voice for each audience?

Brands have to change the tone of voice for the audience they are speaking to: Men are different than women, Millennials are different than Boomers. And when a brand starts to speak to all of them at once, they speak to no one. For brands to be credible in the video space, they need to understand the culture, and be a leader in the culture. Look at cars: Before, we talked about automobiles being a way to freedom. Today, young people don't see cars as freedom, but as a disconnection from all the things they care about. They can't text. They'd rather be in the backseat with their headphones, texting and tweeting. So how could a car company have the same message for both audiences?

What role does social play?

You can't just have video without social. We call it the connected culture. People can connect in their own ways and create the pipeline that you should respond to next.

What is your struggle with metrics, when talking to clients?

It's the age-old problem. We are at least beginning to measure integration, both online and off, so we can look at how many people view a video, plus social listening. We can't put a value on that yet, but we know the value extends beyond simple views. Is it community building? Can we follow them to see if they eventually become consumers?

Is that still the big unanswered question for video?

Yes. It's learning what type of video leads to purchase consideration. And in most cases, we actually have more opportunities for conversion in the digital space — you're a click away. So how can brands really help that experience? I would like to know that we create a video that not only leads to greater engagement with the consumer, [but] also to greater sales. Ⓜ

Space Lab: What Will You Do?: At its core, the YouTube / Lenovo Space Lab campaign was a competition about space experiments, with the goal of building awareness among young scientists. Entrants uploaded a video about what experiment they would do in space, which was reviewed by Space Lab judges, including Stephen Hawking. The winning experiment is to be conducted on the International Space Station. Call-to-action assets, requesting submissions and then asking for votes, drove nearly all the views for the campaign. The effort received a significant amount of paid media, giving the contest a boost. There were thousands of entries for the contest, which generated over 1.4 million views.

Fearless at the 500: Why have one crazy stunt in one big video when you can slice it up into three videos to build anticipation and views? That's exactly what *Fearless at the 500* did, releasing a teaser asset for the world-record jump, the actual jump, and then the big reveal of who the Hot Wheels Yellow Driver was. As you might expect, the actual stunt has the most views for the campaign. A derivative asset, a fan-made video of the stunt from the crowd, is the second most-watched clip of the campaign.

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THE EVER-EVOLVING TABLET

Tapping into the digital realm's most elegant and elusive device has been tough going for marketers

BY GIANNA PALMER

It's no secret that consumers love their tablets.
Retailers know it. Publishers know it. And if the number of YouTube videos of infants playing with iPads is any indication, babies know it, too. So how come marketers have been so slow to jump on the tablet revolution? Part of the issue, of course, is how new tablets are: They make up a category that didn't even exist two years ago. And few predicted just how fast and hard consumers would fall for these devices, sparking a T-commerce revolution that's decidedly different from the way consumers shop via the Internet or even their mobile phones.

"It's almost staggering," says Tracey Scheppach, executive vice president and innovations director at VivaKi, in reference to the growth within the tablet industry. She's noticed her team and other industry insiders have had to keep adjusting their expectations for how fast consumers will adopt tablets. "We were thinking we were crazy with the numbers we were putting out last year," she says. And now? "We're having to up our estimates."

In January, the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project reported that the percentage of Americans who own tablet computers nearly doubled last holiday season, from 10 percent to 19 percent. And the growth in this market shows no sign of stopping.The iPad, the tablet with the largest market share, sold 11.8 million units in its second fiscal quarter alone, Apple reported in April. It's currently the company's fastest growing business, with over 67 million iPads sold since the first model was released in April 2010. It took Apple 24 years to sell that many Macs.

Android tablets are on the rise, too. A survey from Strategy Analytics found that global Android tablet shipments tripled in 2011, to 10.5 million units, and that in the last quarter of the year, Android tablets captured a record 39 percent of the global tablet market, up from 29 percent earlier in the year. (Meanwhile, iPads still account for 58 percent of the tablet market.)

But while that penetration should leave plenty of room for innovation from marketers, most are struggling. And while

there's plenty of data on hand now, many consider reliable metrics at least 18 months away. In February, Paul Verna, a senior analyst at eMarketer, released a report that says between the rapid evolution of these devices, and the fast growth of their share of the digital landscape, monetizing digital content will be a real challenge for both content owners and marketers.

Two years ago, the advertising industry didn't have a specific strategy for tablets, says Paul Gelb, a vice president and the mobile practice lead at Razorfish, because they simply didn't exist in the form they do today: "It's exhausting to keep up with the pace of technology."

Indeed, part of what makes advertising on tablets so challenging is the advanced technical skills it takes to design compelling campaigns. A banner ad that seems elegant in a print edition may fall flat on a tablet, a device known for its audio, visual and touchscreen capabilities.

"The question is: Can you make the ad come to life?" Scheppach says. "Because the tablet makes that possible."

Tablets differ from a traditional desktop or laptop computer, in part, because of their motion sensors. Every iPad, for example, contains a gyroscope and accelerometer, which make it possible to, say, steer through a virtual racecourse by simply tilting the screen this way and that.
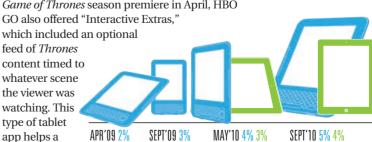
But making full use of this technology tends to be expensive and technically challenging, says Julie Ask, a vice president and principal analyst at Forrester Research. The skills needed to design a tablet ad or app that invokes motion sensing may exceed the skills of the average developer at an agency.

"There's a total scarcity of mobile talent," Ask says, before adding that more "middleware" will likely be released in the years to come, allowing developers to design for tablets with relative ease.

Despite the technological barriers to entry, many publishers and companies have already taken the plunge into tablets. Much of the initial movement into the tablet space has been by content owners: Publications such as *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* launched iPad apps the same month the iPad was first released. Other publications, such as the tech-focused magazine *Wired*, soon followed suit.

Though *The Wall Street Journal* has been lauded for integrating a variety of interactive ads within its own app, many content providers' and publications' tablet apps function mostly as a tool to promote their own brand.

Scheppach offered the example of HBO GO, the network's extremely popular iOS and Android app. A cross-platform app, it offers HBO subscribers new and archived HBO programming within a simple, intuitive touchscreen interface. During the *Game of Thrones* season premiere in April, HBO GO also offered "Interactive Extras," which included an optional feed of *Thrones* content timed to whatever scene the viewer was watching. This type of tablet app helps a

APR'09 2% SEPT'09 3% MAY'10 4% 3% SEPT'10 5% 4%

content provider like HBO retain its audience, Scheppach explains.

That's smart brand-building, she says. "HBO is trying to get you to watch its content wherever it goes and pay a subscription premium for it."

Beyond publishers and content providers, commerce and retail are proving to be an unexpectedly strong appeal of the device, with many consumers considering it to be their favorite way to browse and buy online.

Gelb extols tablets' potential to create a "linear purchase path" for consumers, allowing them to order advertised merchandise, from start to finish, without leaving the original app. For example, Ralph Lauren sponsored *The New York Times* iPad app for a full month last September. As part of the sponsorship arrangement, Ralph Lauren rolled out an app-within-an-app dubbed a "magalog" from which *Times* readers could purchase Polo Ralph Lauren merchandise.

Other retailers and brands have spread out in a variety of creative directions with their own stand-alone apps. Last spring, Friskies, a brand of cat food owned by Purina, launched three iPad games for cats. In March, Joseph Abboud stores at Nordstrom began arming sales associates with iPads loaded with an app that enables customers to order made-to-measure suits from the designer. The Weather Channel's iPad and Android apps offer an illustrated background that shows local conditions in real time, and alerts for when severe weather is on the way.

Automakers, unsurprisingly, are also among tablet industry leaders, as they aim to cater to high-income consumers. (Tablet users make up a desirable demographic, Verna explains: They tend to be affluent, digitally savvy and influential among their peers.) Fiat, Kia, Ford, Hyundai and Audi are all among the automakers that have released interactive iPad apps. These apps allow consumers to preview paint colors, get a virtual 3-D tour of the vehicles and even book an appointment with their local auto dealer.
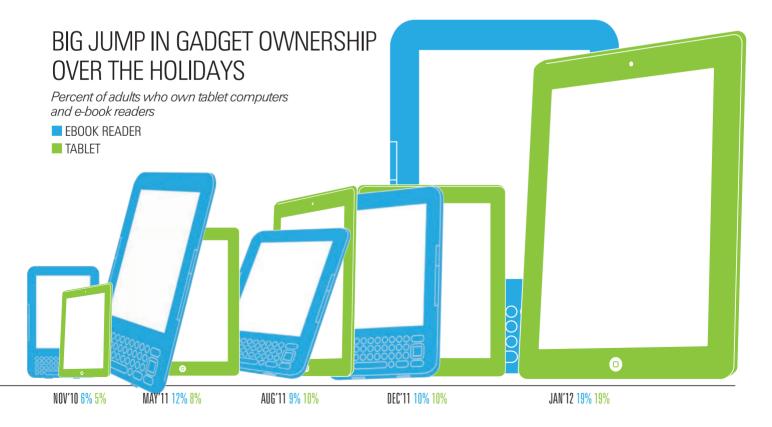
Yet despite the many examples of companies who've created innovative tablet content and apps, others with the budget and capacity to do so may opt not to take the plunge into the unknown. As of now, it's not fully possible to measure a return on an advertiser's investment in a tablet ad or campaign. There's no measurement system for tablets equivalent to, say, television's Nielsen ratings.

"Proof that it works is one of the things that holds advertisers or marketers back," Ask says.

Scheppach, for her part, is adamant that there needs to be a standard ad model and functioning metrics for tablets. She is the founder and leader of a comprehensive global research initiative out of VivaKi, called The Pool, which has worked on developing ad models in emerging media.

The Pool's latest initiative is focused on tablets and will take 18 months to complete. During this period VivaKi will arrange several meetings between major publishers — like ABC, *USA Today* and Scripps — and advertisers such as Coke, General Motors and Samsung. The goal, Scheppach says, is to work as a group to create the ad standard for tablets as soon as possible: "We all have to band together because this is innovation like we've never seen before." Ⓜ

BIG JUMP IN GADGET OWNERSHIP OVER THE HOLIDAYS

Percent of adults who own tablet computers and e-book readers

- ■ EBOOK READER
- ■ TABLET

NOV'10	MAY'11	AUG'11	DEC'11	JAN'12
6% 5%	12% 8%	9% 10%	10% 10%	19% 19%

The Metric Muddle

It's the $39.5 billion question: Which digital platforms deliver the most bang for the buck? **BY P.J. BEDNARSKI**

In the television realm, marketers understand cost-per-thousand. It's how they purchase eyeballs, and it's the single magic number that simplifies every spending decision.

But even as digital advertising continues its explosion, there's still unease and anxiety: Where are the magic numbers? When will the industry come up with bedrock metrics that demystify digital platforms? Do they work, and how should they be valued? It's a question that digital marketing and ad agencies are grappling with and have been for the last 15 years in which the digital world evolved.

Market attribution — the tricky business of pulling apart successful marketing campaigns to determine where consumers experienced messages and what they did with them — continues to be one of the biggest cross-channel issues.

Was it SEO, or email, Facebook or Twitter, a banner ad or, more likely, a quirky combination of all of those advertising avenues that drove a merchandiser's sales? With digital ad environments, marketers say, not all the parts do the same job, but lots of times, all of the parts do some part of the job.

"Marketers spend more on digital with each budget cycle, and they want to know how best to allocate to a bewildering range of options," notes a new report, "Marketing Attribution: Valuing the Customer Journey," created by Econsultancy working with Google Analytics. "Typically, the tools available to them have provided visibility into the very top of the funnel (views, clicks, opens) and the bottom (sales, registrations, leads). Marketing and budget optimization have overlooked most of the funnel, where influence and research occur, and where 100 percent of opportunity gets whittled down to 2 percent conversion."

"It's important to remember attribution doesn't tell you about success [of using a particular digital mode] on the face of it," adds Stefan Tornquist, U.S. vice president of research for Econsultancy and author of the report. "Attribution tells you what channels are participating. When you go beneath that, you're able to draw conclusions" about their role in the sales transaction.

How to attribute the value of digital cross-channel ad platforms and appraise their ROI is the $39.5 billion question. That's how much eMarketer estimates online advertising comprises in 2012, up

23.3 percent from 2011. But with answers still evolving.

Econsultancy's report says that 83 percent of its 607 agency and client study participants have engaged in market attribution for less than two years. Another 28 percent began in just the last six months. It's still growing up, and advertisers are sometimes using research shorthand instead of sound analytics.

For example, although there's general agreement that it's simplistic and wrong that a successful consumer transaction should be credited to the "last click" in the decision chain, most of the study's participants do just that.

John Montgomery, COO North America of GroupM Interaction, imagines a boy with a lifelong affection for Mercedes-Benz who, in middle age, decides to act. "Finally, at the age of 45, I've got an executive sales position, and I can afford my first Mercedes-Benz. So I Google 'Mercedes-Benz Manhattan' and click on it — and Google gets all the credit! But really, it was a complex matrix of advertising — millions of dollars of advertising — word-of-mouth, editorial, racing sponsorship. That's the controversy that's gone on about attribution."

With a different perspective is Alan Armbruster, a partner in the retail and television consulting firm Eckstein, Summers Armbruster & Co., which gives marketing advice to TV stations and local car dealers, often at the same time. He's a bullish proponent of using digital media, and he's not concerned that his car dealers know how every part of it works.

"I tell them there are three things you ought to have: a Facebook page, YouTube and Twitter," he says. "We quit looking at where car buyers were coming from. They really don't know. Lots of things brought them in there."

One thing that he knows, though, is that by the time a customer walks into a showroom, they are there to buy. They aren't driving around. They've already been to 10 to 20 Web sites. That the Web brought them there is indisputable. Armbruster thinks it's impossible to identify each part of the sales funnel and futile to try.

On a larger scale, though, the biggest agencies and advertisers have spent time and millions of dollars figuring out their proprietary attribution metrics. GroupM has different attribution models for different products. It can test series of ads and then see how each works in combination with other digital advertising — all guiding that Mercedes-Benz car shopper from inquiry to test drive to purchase.

"In order for us to know what led to the decision, we have to go way, way to the top of the [advertising] funnel," Montgomery explains. "We have to know at what point we should serve an ad online for someone like that. Understanding how that works, we can go online and create attribution models to determine what is the most effective point in the funnel to create a search ad that will take them to action."

What makes attribution and cross-channel metrics hard is that digital advertising is good at creating value in areas traditional advertising usually isn't even capable of providing.

St. Louis-based advertising agency Moosylvania, which specializes in the digital space with clients that include Universal Studios, Capital Bank and Enterprise, recently issued its own report, "The Path to Purchase," that indicates how differently consumers use advertising in the digital space than how advertising is used in other media.

For example, its consumer survey reveals 74 percent say they look at smartphone or tablets for product information before they shop; 62 percent say they use their smartphones while shopping; and 67 percent say they comment about goods and services. Those are just consumer functions that traditional advertising has no way to provide. Indeed, a few years ago, smartphones were relatively rare. Now they're exceedingly common and, the report says, advertisers have to at least plan their Web sites to get the ROI that's possible by providing a good functioning mobile site.

How consumers use digital doesn't conform well with traditional advertising. A huge influencer of consumer purchases is online product reviews by other consumers, even more so than reviews from product experts, the Moosylvania study shows.

And in the digital arena, Rodney Mason, Moosylvania's CMO, says consumers can rapidly attack a company for some perceived infraction that can quickly turn sales sour if that firm isn't closely watching its search mentions. The touchy-feely part of a company's Web site or Facebook page, Econsultancy's Tornquist agrees, gives a company a kind of Web-based personality.

Most all of those for-instances go into the mix of what can be measured by market attribution. "Some old-line advertisers think of digital as a 'buy,'" Mason says. "It's not. It's a behavior. When you get into the intricacies of that, it gets pretty easy to solve your digital challenge.

"There are clients who have very strong brands, and they built those brands off of traditional media," he says. "And they don't want to pull back those

ALTHOUGH THERE'S GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT IT'S SIMPLISTIC AND WRONG THAT A SUCCESSFUL CONSUMER TRANSACTION SHOULD BE CREDITED TO THE "LAST CLICK" IN THE DECISION CHAIN, MOST OF THE STUDY'S PARTICIPANTS DO JUST THAT.

media. They're in a very tough space. They don't want to walk away from the tried-and-true. But they're making a big mistake when they do that because every generation comes up acclimated to new media and that media changes every two or three years. The new consumers coming in now prefer digital. They just do. Advertisers that don't understand that — they'll be completely irrelevant."

Measuring all of that has become the goal of major advertisers, of course. The three big advertising trade associations last year joined with more than three dozen marketers, agencies and publishers to work to create an industry-wide online measurement initiative. The so-called 3MS (for Making Measurement Make Sense) wants to have digital ads measured in ways comparable to other advertising, and defining seemingly simple — but really very difficult — questions like: What's an impression? Other measurements, like one from Nielsen, attempt to create a kind of a number like gross ratings point, or GRP.

GroupM's Montgomery, who is deeply involved with the industry effort, says, "It's a complex area because there are so many pieces to it. And the pieces have pieces. The difficulty is how you establish a unified metric across both mediums. This debate has been going on for many years — for as long as I've been in this industry we have been talking about a digital GRP.

"Well, the digital guys say the GRP is such an offline metric. It's reach versus frequency, and it gives you an exposure rating. Whereas in online we have such sophisticated metrics. We know what ads they're seeing, which ones they clicked on, what action they took before they were on the site, what they did after. We [even] have eye cameras [that] can track their eyes across the ad, with their permission, so we can see if they even saw the ad."

What GRPs have, most of all in Montgomery's view, is familiarity. They exist.

"The GRP is a metric that brand marketers are very familiar [with]," Montgomery acknowledges, "and they're very good at using it. In the offline area, they've been very used to attaching met-

rics to GRPs: 'How many GRPs do I need in the campaign in order for my brand to experience brand lift?' So if we in online can establish some kind of unified or consistent metric between online and offline, I think it wouldn't be difficult for marketers to justify moving big brand dollars into online."

But the cross-channel metrics that major advertisers, marketers and agencies have already do work, though they are in-house measurements. Tornquist says most major agencies have no trouble putting a value on the performance of various parts of their digital packages.
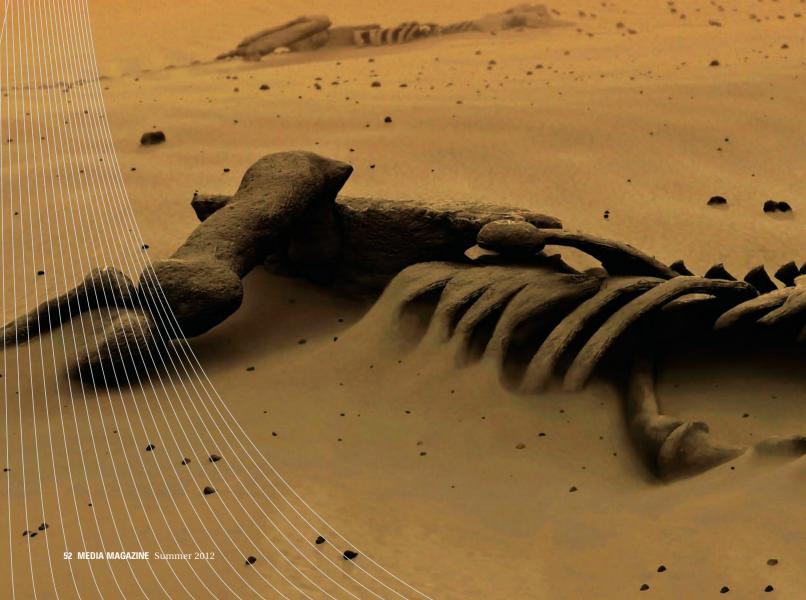
"It's very dangerous, whether it's attribution or analysis in general. It should be said that all of them can be valuable, with a kind of ellipsis, if done right," Tornquist notes. "And that's an easy thing to say, harder to do. We all have experienced organizations that give a nod to data where the people are just looking for enough justification to do what they always wanted to do anyway. I'm fine with gut instinct based on experience. There are worse ways to behave. A worse way is to take data that was flawed and believe it's true." Ⓜ

"SOME OLD-LINE ADVERTISERS THINK OF DIGITAL AS A 'BUY.' IT'S NOT. IT'S A BEHAVIOR. WHEN YOU GET INTO THE INTRICACIES OF THAT, IT GETS PRETTY EASY TO SOLVE YOUR DIGITAL CHALLENGE."

The Last Gasp of

[Old School] Marketing

Bob Garfield weighs in on inertia, the ultimate death of mass media and whether Madison Avenue can really undo the last 100 years

BY JOE MANDESE

When it comes to enormous change in media and marketing, there's never been a shortage of prophets or doomsayers, but the apocalypse never quite arrived. While editor-at-large Bob Garfield admits that Jurassic marketing models have survived longer than he expected, audiences are still shrinking and prices still rising. That means the tipping point is closer than it appears, he believes. The good news? In the very near future, the relationship between marketer and consumer will be a whole lot cozier.

Garfield, a speaker at the Brand Marketers Summit, fills Joe Mandese in on the new rules of radical transparency.

The theme of this issue is "radical change" in the media and marketing business, a subject that has been dear to your heart. What's your current thinking on that?
I don't care to comment.

Great, we'll just publish that as a big pull quote, with your picture on it.
Well, I think we are in the middle of a radical reset of all of the forces that we have long taken for granted. We, of course, have seen the ongoing collapse of entire categories of media — newspapers, magazines, music, book publishing, and increasingly, Hollywood, and the television networks, as well as local broadcasting. As dramatic as those changes have seemed, and as disruptive as they have been, I think I underestimated the amount of time before broadcasters would start going into the red, and consolidation would take place.

Well, if you look at the newspaper industry as the canary in the coal mine — that has already happened. Why have broadcasters been able to hold on for so long?
Several reasons. One is inertia. An object in motion stays in motion. You know, there's a lot invested in the status quo, and nobody wants to let it go. The second reason is that advertisers are willing to pay more for something they can measure — even if the measurements are dubious — than for new distribution channels that are difficult to get a handle on. Third, the promised targeting in digital marketing has substantially not been achieved because of fears of regulatory and legislative backlash.

The reason more money hasn't moved from broadcast to digital is that last gasp mentality. As their mass audience shrinks and shrinks, ironically and paradoxically, it has made what remains of their mass audience even more valuable. So, advertisers continue to pay a premium for something that is diminishing compared to the "good old days," but it's still much greater than you can achieve efficiently online or even on cable. It's like paying $9 a gallon at the last gas station before Death Valley. You know you're getting gouged, but … what are your options?

So what does that mean for marketers and their agencies? How are they changing and evolving because of this tipping point that we're reaching?
Well, if you listen to people like — and, now, you're going to have to fill in the blank here — I don't know the guy's name — the CMO of Subway [Tony Pace], he is just delighted with the status quo, because a lot of his peers are running away from TV and socking a lot more money into online and other channels. He is marching out and buying more and more inventory all the time with glee, because he still thinks that is the most efficient way of doing business. This is a big, big, big customer. His story is that he's delighted to see the other customers run away because that gives him more buying power. That may be working for Subway now, but I think it's a very shortsighted view. I hope they are prepared to change radically when the tipping point does occur — when the audiences are so small in broadcast and the price is so high, and the ad avoidance so substantial, that you cease to be able to manipulate the numbers to create the illusion of return-on-investment.

You're a member of the media industry itself — a journalist who covers advertising. Aside from being an oxymoron, what kind of unique vantage point does that give you in terms of the way other people in the industry look at it?
Nobody can argue that I'm self-interested in my various apocalyptic proclamations. On the contrary. I don't think there's anyone more vulnerable than a print media person. Of course, I'm now at MediaPost, right? So, things have changed a bit. But for most of the time that I've been writing about this, I was a print reporter covering an industry from within an industry that itself was in great jeopardy. Believe me, I felt it every which way. I was extremely invested, and I continue to be extremely invested, in the status quo. But that's no reason to be a denialist. My personal economic model has had to change dramatically, and it wasn't my choice. I have a bunch of friends who are just so "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil," and they're completely vulnerable. They are totally at the mercy of their companies' ability to lose money for yet another year before finally closing up shop. It's terrible. So, I may be an alarmist, but I'm not a self-interested one.

How much of that do you think is a glass half-empty perspective coming from established media versus looking at the upside? If you look at what Google did, it created a whole new cottage industry for Madison Avenue — search optimization and paid search. The same thing is happening now with social. We don't necessarily understand how it's all going to manifest, but it's creating new opportunities, too.
Yeah, but what's weird to me is how, instead of taking the opportunities as they are presented in social, so many people seem to be trying to force the square peg of social into the round hole of traditional media — you know, trying to use social as a means to drive transactions, for example. I see it all the time, and it's like, "No, social is not a sales strategy." Yet, for whatever reason, both clients

and a substantial percentage of the social agencies just don't seem to grasp it or internalize it.

So, it's a combination of taking the opportunities that present themselves, and a failure to understand precisely what those opportunities are. Everybody wants transactions, and everybody wants to have a sustainable ongoing business with a low cost of acquisitions, and a high percentage of customer retention and loyalty and advocacy, and all that comes with it. But you don't get that by using your Facebook page to try to make sales. Yet you see that just everywhere. It's kind of phenomenal.

Garfield

"SO, I MAY BE AN ALARMIST, BUT I'M NOT A SELF-INTERESTED ONE."

Isn't that because they're trying to retrofit old business models into a new medium that they haven't figured out how to use yet?
I think that's true. I think there is no greater example of that than this cult of the viral video.

You consult a little bit on the agency side these days. What is it like, when clients come in and ask for a "viral video" or a "viral campaign" and expect it to happen like magic? Is that really the mind-set that is out there right now?
I'm not in those meetings, but I think, for all the complaints of agencies that talk of clients coming in and requesting a viral video, there is no shortage of agencies claiming that they're in the viral video production business. That's just manifestly undoable. Virality is a phenomenon, and it happens very seldom. Planning for it is a fool's errand. Promising it to a client is fraud. If that is your goal, everything you do along the way to achieve it and fail is going to be counterproductive for your business.

The other thing about it is that many agencies think the solution is, "Well, no, we're not going to be doing that many 30-second spots on full broadcast anymore, but look at all the production we can do online." There's this endless desire for more and more videos, for more and more channels, whether it's YouTube or Facebook, or what have you. But I'm not sure that the way to do social is to constantly create new videos that are just essentially TV commercials online. There is just virtually no evidence that people respond to TV advertising in a social space. On the contrary, they consider it boring to have to view, and rude of the person asking them to view it.

It's kind of like going to somebody's home for dinner, and you find out that at dessert they start pulling out easels and drawing circles for an Amway presentation. It's just bad manners. The evidence is mounting that there's an inverse relationship between branded-ness and pass-along. So, as such, if you're producing video online and it looks like a commercial — and that is what most of the agencies are doing — you're producing the wrong things.

So, social is a cause célèbre for our industry. We are all enamored and preoccupied with it. But, over the 30 years that you've been a journalist covering this industry, there's been "the next big thing" shaking everything up or freaking everybody out. It might've been search before this, and it'll probably be mobile after it. And there'll be something after that. But it seems like these things are just accelerating and catching people by surprise. What do you think is "the next big thing?"
Ah, I think "the next big thing" is the convergence of technology, the collapse of real mass media, of real reach, and a change in society's view toward corporations that will fundamentally change brand and customer relationships. Not because anybody voted for it, but because of this perfect storm of Internet transparency and loss of reach. We are in this new era of relationships that will define success or failure for, basically, all brands and all institutions. So, it's not a question of talking about social, or traditional, or mobile, or app-based or Web-based, but just a fundamental shift in the way people relate to the people who provide goods and services. That's where I stack all my chips. It's on the idea that the future of marketing is the future of sustainable relationships.

As much as our relationships with brands have changed elsewhere online, the change will be even more evident in mobile, because, in addition to vying for our attention, and in addition to not wanting marketers to interrupt us in our social life, we will less want them to interfere in our busy running-around-all-day lives. And, even less, will we want them interfering in our battery life. To the extent that our finite battery life is chewed up by people sending you offers that you don't want to see, and tweets that are self-serving, and so on, there is a tremendous, tremendous possibility for backlash. I'm willing to put up with some over-promotional stuff on my desktop. If this stuff starts taking my precious battery life, I might start a boycott or a wholesale insurrection.
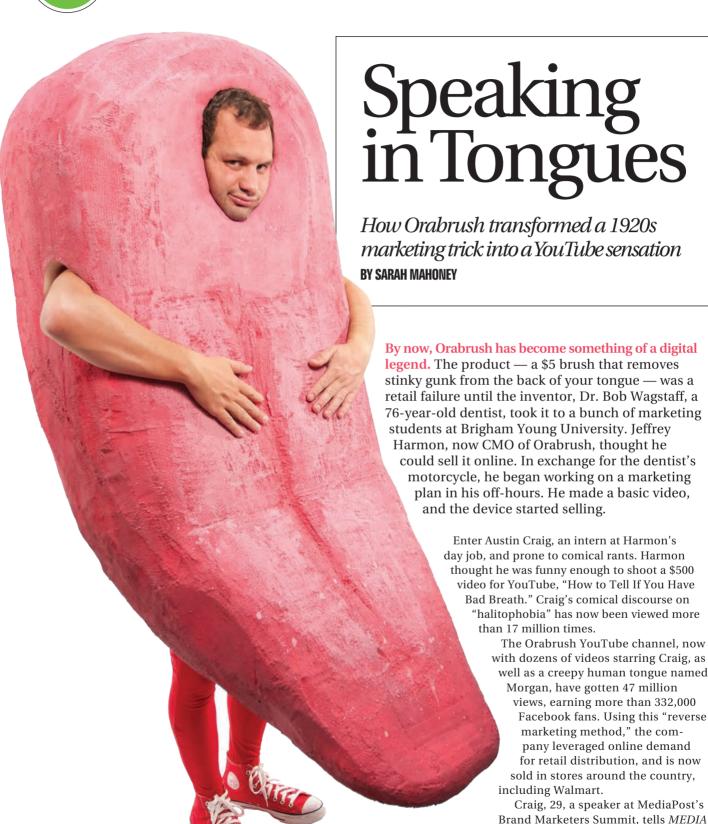
What's the one piece of advice you could give brands and agencies right now to prepare for this?
I would say, in everything you do, think about valuing trust over time. Anything that you do that will make you less trustworthy in the long term is something that you should not undertake at all. That can range from [being] a big phony in your social platforms, to lying, to being too intrusive, to selling where you're really in a social situation. And if you do get caught in some sort of scandal or controversy, don't try to lie about it. You've got to go to radical transparency because that has been imposed on you by the digital revolution. And wishing that you could operate behind the fortress of opacity is dead. That is gone forever.

In other words, people should do the exact opposite of what Madison Avenue has been doing for the last 100 years?
Yes, that's basically it. Yeah, in the present, and certainly in the future, the relationships between brands and their various audiences will directly parallel the relationships that individuals have between one another. And you can no longer dictate the terms in a relationship if there is nobody who is listening. Ⓜ

Speaking in Tongues

How Orabrush transformed a 1920s marketing trick into a YouTube sensation

BY SARAH MAHONEY

By now, Orabrush has become something of a digital legend. The product — a $5 brush that removes stinky gunk from the back of your tongue — was a retail failure until the inventor, Dr. Bob Wagstaff, a 76-year-old dentist, took it to a bunch of marketing students at Brigham Young University. Jeffrey Harmon, now CMO of Orabrush, thought he could sell it online. In exchange for the dentist's motorcycle, he began working on a marketing plan in his off-hours. He made a basic video, and the device started selling.

Enter Austin Craig, an intern at Harmon's day job, and prone to comical rants. Harmon thought he was funny enough to shoot a $500 video for YouTube, "How to Tell If You Have Bad Breath." Craig's comical discourse on "halitophobia" has now been viewed more than 17 million times.

The Orabrush YouTube channel, now with dozens of videos starring Craig, as well as a creepy human tongue named Morgan, have gotten 47 million views, earning more than 332,000 Facebook fans. Using this "reverse marketing method," the company leveraged online demand for retail distribution, and is now sold in stores around the country, including Walmart.

Craig, 29, a speaker at MediaPost's Brand Marketers Summit, tells *MEDIA* what he thinks has fueled Orabrush's success.

So first things first. What secret can big brands learn from you?

Sorry, but there isn't a secret. Or a silver bullet. We think it's a combination of humor and timing and the right creative. And we're constantly testing. We just tried to figure out what people wanted to see on YouTube. We decided to target teens and tweens because they are the biggest YouTube users and spend the most time there. (And about a quarter of our YouTube audience is teens, and just under two-thirds of the total audience is male.) We knew they liked videos that are fast-talking, framed very tight and personality-driven. And then we made it funny.

Is it hard to make these videos?

Yes! I was a broadcast journalism major, so when Jeff [Harmon], who directed me, would ask me to really push something suggestive over the top — like the part about "before you go to bed"— it was pretty uncomfortable for me.

I think it's funny that you start out in the video with an invented word, halitophobia. Halitosis is also an invented word, from back in the '20s, created to sell Listerine. Maybe the world of bad breath hasn't changed, even in the digital age?

We think it's funny, too. In our upcoming campaign, we're going to be doing a lot more of word play.

What else is changing?

We're expanding the product line, with tongue foam. And we're changing the video strategy. For at least a year, we were doing a regular series putting out regular content and that grew our audience quite a bit, and increased our social following. Now, we're getting back to persuading people and selling the product. So there won't be weekly updates, but we will put out new content monthly.

We are a lot more data driven, and we're doing much more testing. Titles, tags — we're even testing different cuts of videos to see which versions drive more sales at the Web sites, and more in stores. There's a lot of focus on metrics.

What has Orabrush's video success taught you?

I prefer to be engaged and taught in a way

Austin Craig's antics have helped attract 47 million views

that isn't going to lose my attention. If you can get some kind of emotive reaction from people, make them raise an eyebrow or smile or laugh, they are going to retain that.

What other brands do you admire on YouTube?

GoPro, a line of action cameras you strap to your helmet when you're doing extreme sports. The videos are jaw-dropping. And I love that it doesn't focus on the product, but what people are doing with it.

So what does a YouTube star watch on YouTube for fun?

It doesn't matter how bad my day is going — I can watch Nathan Barnatt dancing and instantly feel better about life. Ⓜ

Courting the Digitally Demanding Affluent Market

The rich are different. In the laptop of luxury, brands surf the divide between democratization and exclusivity **BY GAIL BELSKY**

If you still think luxury brands are lagging behind in the digital-space race, don't turn around to check. You might miss Cartier or Prada whizzing ahead with their high-concept, cutting-edge, far-reaching and very cool use of all things digital. There was a time, not that long ago, when exclusive brands were afraid that mass exposure would cheapen their image. Now those upscale converts are everywhere — on Twitter and Tumblr, Facebook and Pinterest — capturing and sharing the luxury experience both online and off.

Luxury brands are everywhere because the consumer is everywhere — and because it's better to be out in the digital world than stuck on a magazine page that fewer and fewer people are looking at. They're everywhere because being relevant and visible is worth losing control of your image — especially since you'd already lost it, according to Marci Ikeler, director of digital strategy at Grey Group. That's the thing about digital: Consumers can complain about your brand any-time, anywhere, and the free world will be there to hear it. As Ikeler says, "The only option you have is whether you want to participate in the conversation or not."

Cartier's "L'Odyssée de Cartier"

However reluctant luxury brands once were about joining the masses, they're over it now. Four out of five are engaged in ecommerce, according to a 2011 PM Digital study — and the ones who aren't have suffered for it. Brands with no online store on their Web sites got only 2 percent of total visits. The report also showed that the 10 biggest luxury brands account for nearly 90 percent of online market share. Those brands are there because their customers are — smartphones, tablets and credit cards in hand.

Along with fearing that mass exposure would tarnish their brand's image, some luxury marketers believed that affluent (aka older) buyers weren't in the digital space. Anyone who still thinks that probably carries a Filofax, and probably isn't a luxury marketer. Affluent consumers, whether they're 55 or 25, are more likely to have a smartphone than non-affluent ones — and virtually all of them are online. A 2011 study by the Interactive Advertising Bureau showed that 98 percent of affluent consumers spent an average of 26 hours a week online. One-third of them own smartphones, compared to 17 percent of the general population.

That's not news to Audi, which knows exactly where to find its customers. "Research shows that 41 percent of American Internet users shop for cars on their mobile devices, and 92 percent of Audi buyers visit audiusa.com before purchasing their vehicle," says Loren Angelo, general manager of brand

marketing at Audi of America. Not surprisingly, the company is making mobile a priority in 2012. It's also expanding in other social media platforms — no doubt to keep its edge. Audi has the distinction of having more fan involvement on Facebook than any other brand — luxury or not—according to a 2011 study by the social analytics platform Visibli.
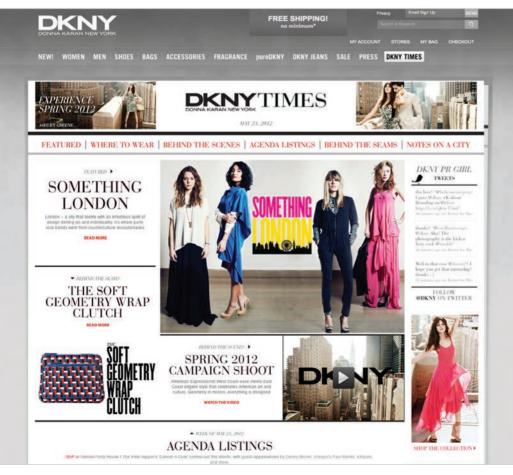
"Audi's core values of design, performance and innovation play across multiple mediums and multiple audiences," says Angelo. "We're a passionate brand with equally passionate followers. We want to give our customers, future customers and supporters creative and socially relevant ways to express themselves."

For upscale marketers, the current of digital media flows in both directions. It takes the brand out to consumers in the real world, while bringing consumers into the luxury world. The technology that forced these brands to become democratic has actually helped them to be more exclusive. "They started seeing innovation as luxury," says Yuli Ziv, CEO and founder of Style Coalition, a network of online beauty and fashion publishers. From the 4-D light show that Ralph Lauren famously projected onto its flagship on Madison Ave. two years ago to Cartier's recent foray into short film, "L'Odyssée de Cartier," luxury brands are using the new technologies to blend art with commerce — and create a lot of social buzz while doing it.

Digital media brings the luxury experience to new levels,

and to new consumers who might not have the physical access or the bank account to enjoy the real thing. Unlike the literal experience, the digital one isn't about shopping: It's about being in a rarified world of fashion, art, creativity and celebrity — where $500 tote bags, $1,200 trench coats and $3,000 watches are right at home, even if you're not. The technology brings luxury marketers closer to a demographic they didn't always reach: the aspiring affluent. Social media is the perfect outlet for reaching future customers, according to Ikeler: "The fan base is younger; they're not shopping Gucci yet, but they're posting about saving up. They're aspiring to get closer to the brand."

For a category that was dragging its feet getting into the digital space, luxury brands now have a Size-20 footprint. Donna Karan New York, for example, has an ecommerce site, a branded content site called DKNY Times, and an interactive philanthropic forum called Women Who Inspire. It has two Tumblrs — Donna's Journal and Notes on a City (about all things New York), an iPhone app, a branded Facebook page and a QR code in conjunction with Neiman Marcus. The brand is also on Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram. And that's just for the high-end line.

The company's more youthful bridge line, DKNY, has its own digital map that includes Twitter and Pinterest (with five separate boards), an iPhone app and the popular DKNY PR Girl Tumblr, produced by Aliza Licht, senior vice president of global communications at Donna Karan International. The blog covers everything from product editorial to events in the fashion world to general pop culture.

"DKNY PR Girl was originally developed to give a behind-the-scenes look at a NYC fashion publicist," says Licht. "It's more casual and quirky, and with DKNY, I'm able to push the boundaries more in the digital space."

How does the company decide where and how to present each line? "Having strong and defined brand DNA for both Donna Karan New York and DKNY, it's easy to determine the digital paths we can take," says Licht. "Donna Karan herself offers a wealth of content, from

things she loves, places she's traveled and causes she believes in."

Certain principles are the same in digital marketing as in traditional: You tailor the message to the medium, and the medium to the consumer. But the lines are more blurred, according to Licht. "There are certainly demographics and individuals that weigh more heavily in the digital world, versus more traditional vehicles like print, but there really aren't distinct buckets anymore."

For luxury marketers, one of the key benefits to being in the digital space is the ability to create luxury experiences that move from online to offline and back online. Whatever is happening in the real world becomes content for the digital world, and vice versa. Audi's "#WantAnR8" Twitter campaign is the perfect example. In 2011, a fan from Washington, D.C., tweeted the company to say how much she wanted an Audi R8. In her tweet, she used the hashtag #WantAnR8. Audi saw an opportunity and grabbed it.

"We believe it's crucial to listen to consumers engaging our social channels, so we took notice and drove a brand new Audi R8 to her house to use for the day," says Angelo. They followed up by launching an official Twitter contest, giving users the chance to drive an R8 for a day just by tweeting. Since then, the hashtag has been used 75,000 times.

This year, Audi took the campaign one step further. In March, the company ran a 30-second commercial announcing the return of the R8 Twitter contest, first on its YouTube channel, and then on network TV. This time there will be eight winners, who can choose between having the car brought to their homes or driving it around the track at Audi Sportscar Experience in Sonoma, Calif.

It's not just the major luxury marketers who are developing offline-online user experiences. Patrón Spirits, an ultra-premium tequila brand, created an online community called "The Patrón Social Club" which now has 250,000 members. The brand comes up with programs and activities for members to talk about online, including a series of tequila-and-dinner pairing parties held at secret locations in cities around the country. Patrón works with local media partners to promote the event, and members who live in that city can enter a random drawing for an invitation.

"We're giving them exclusive ways to get into the brand," says Jennifer Long, marketing director at Patrón Spirits. "It's all

UNLIKE THE LITERAL EXPERIENCE, THE DIGITAL ONE ISN'T ABOUT SHOPPING: IT'S ABOUT BEING IN A RARIFIED WORLD OF FASHION, ART, CREATIVITY AND CELEBRITY — WHERE $500 TOTE BAGS, $1,200 TRENCH COATS AND $3,000 WATCHES ARE RIGHT AT HOME, EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT

about storytelling. Stories are what people are going to share with their friends. It's the best endorsement you can get for a luxury brand."

So what does all of that experiencing and sharing ultimately add up to? If it's not connected to a brand's online store, who knows? "The lack of linkage between experiential campaigns and brand Web sites is a major problem throughout the industry," says Ikeler. "At the moment, luxury ecommerce sites tend to focus only on the commerce and product information, which means that they are not speaking to consumers who are more aspirational, or might be looking for an experience with the brand."

Still, there's no doubt that being in the digital space is key for luxury brands — even if the customer experience doesn't directly lead to a sale. It's like the real world: Not everyone who walks in the door of a luxury brand store is going to buy something, but they definitely want to soak up the ambience. And maybe they'll come back. Ⓜ

Brands With White Hats

In the digital age, every aspect of marketing lives in a glass-house. Here's how to make a response plan that's bulletproof
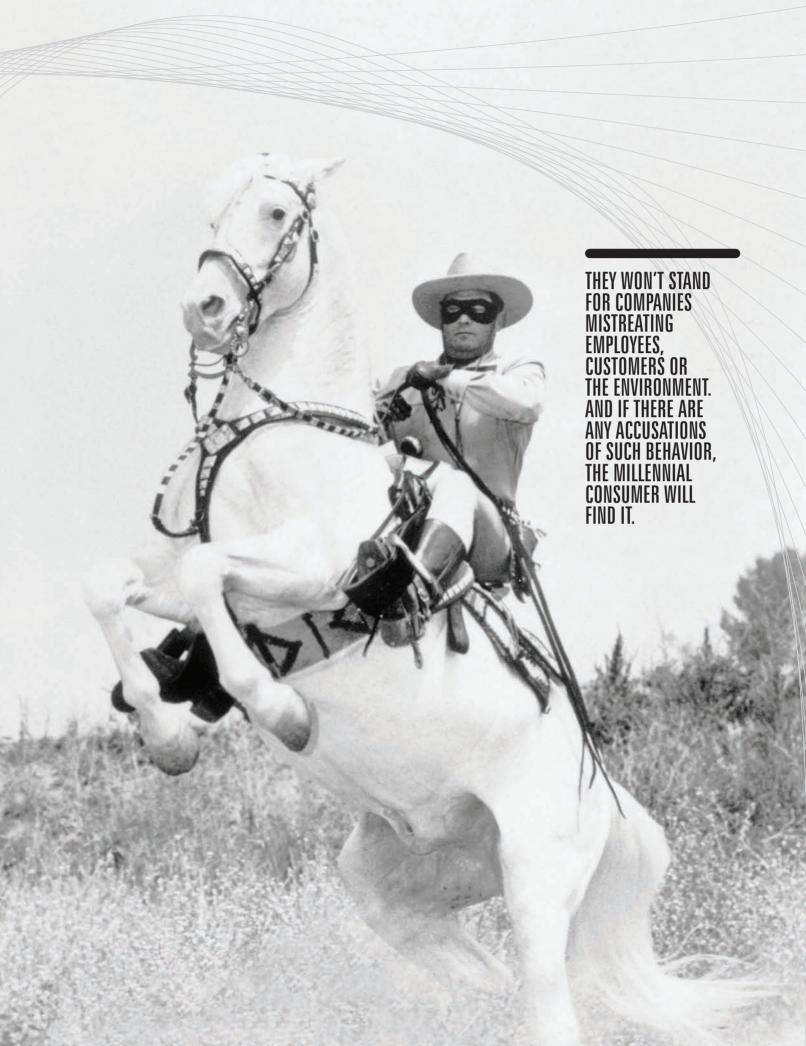
BY CARRIE CUMMINGS

In January, the world turned into their pearl-clutching grandmothers when NPR's *This American Life* ran a story about the conditions of a Chinese factory that manufactured Apple products. The conditions were deplorable, the workers were poisoned, maimed even, and Apple was to blame. The story spread rapidly, and within a few hours, was picked up by every major news outlet and trickled down to Twitter feeds around the world. Then came the retraction two months after the broadcast: "I have difficult news." *This American Life* host Ira Glass wrote in a press release, "We've learned that Mike Daisey's story about Apple in China — which we broadcast in January — contained significant fabrications. We're retracting the story because we can't vouch for its truth."

But the damage was done. Apple, ranked the world's most admired brand for four years running, went into damage control mode and took a shot at transparency. Apple issued a press release in February announcing that the Fair Labor Association would conduct voluntary audits of its factories in China at the technology company's request. In March, Apple CEO Tim Cook made a visit to China to tour the factory in question.

The story has since become old news in many consumers' minds, but the long-term damage for Apple is still unknown. The real story here, though, is that in the digital age, consumer perceptions of transparency and responsibility are key to brand loyalty. And even a seemingly infallible company like Apple is vulnerable.

In fact, the Apple factory uproar has turned into somewhat of a cautionary tale for brands whose aim is to create relationships with consumers. Bottom line: In the digital era, the consumer cares and can find out anything about your company, true or false. It's time to usher in the age of brand transparency and responsibility and marketers seem up for the task.

THEY WON'T STAND FOR COMPANIES MISTREATING EMPLOYEES, CUSTOMERS OR THE ENVIRONMENT. AND IF THERE ARE ANY ACCUSATIONS OF SUCH BEHAVIOR, THE MILLENNIAL CONSUMER WILL FIND IT.

GETTING SOCIAL

It's not surprising that social media is leading the charge in corporate transparency and responsibility. It's also not surprising that it's catching some marketers off guard. Just five years ago, Twitter was in its infancy, and Facebook was still a place where college kids planned their next kegger. Fast forward to 2012, and both social networks are the platforms for many sophisticated and costly advertising and marketing campaigns. But such rapid change in a short amount of time has left holes in brands' social strategies – namely ones where they aren't recognizing that the consumer has more control over the brand's message than even the marketers themselves.

"I don't believe companies have the control any more," says Mike Germano, CEO of Carrot Creative, a Brooklyn-based new-media marketing agency. "It's more a political campaign than an ad campaign. You know there will be positives and negatives. You need to be out there with the information that people can easily search so you are ahead of the battle in real time, which is important."

Although losing control over a brand's message seems worrisome, there is really nothing that can be done to change social media's new role in a company's image. That's OK, though, because smart marketers know that being reactive is the key to creating better relationships with consumers.

Looking back at Apple's recent crisis shows how the brand effectively handled the aftermath of the negative publicity through savvy reactions. Addressing the allegations, implementing new safety audits and even sending the CEO on a tour of the Chinese factory were all efficient efforts in mitigating the PR disaster that was created. Social and traditional media caught on and disseminated the company's moves. Apple's consumers appeared pleased not just by the results of Apple's reactions, but also that Apple seemed to care enough to take action.

"In terms of when addressing negative actions by a company, no company wants to be proactive with that, and 99 percent of the time, the situation only lets you be reactive. So companies need to have good social listening tools. They need to be proactive in creating a plan so they can effectively react," says Germano.

Thus, a preemptive strike isn't necessary, so long as a planned reaction system is in place and, most importantly, is swiftly implemented.

"The old world thinking is that any corporate communication needs to go through 15 degrees of approval, and I think that social media is proving a challenge," says Zach Newcomb, executive account director, Rokkan, a digital marketing agency. "They need to figure out the key elements most important to their consumers and I would argue that its timeliness of response."

In fact, if there was one thing brand managers should have learned from the BP oil spill, even making

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WHEN OLIVE GARDEN TWEETS BACK A SIMPLE "SORRY!" OR "WE'LL FIX THAT," THEY ARE DOING MORE THAN ADDRESSING A PROBLEM. THEY ARE ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP.

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a few wrong decisions quickly creates a better perception than waiting too long to do what will ultimately solve the problem.

STRATEGY: LOOKING GOOD IS AS IMPORTANT AS BEING GOOD

Marketers are well aware of how consumers perceive brands and what they expect from the brands they support. In creating successful digital strategies to incorporate transparency, marketers are now forced to include the consumer in the conversation.

"Brands need to identify and reach out to the most active consumers and make them part of the team," says Jack Myers, media economist and editor of the Jack Myers Media Business Report. This team, Myers says, is built exclusively through social media and for good reason: "Social media is the fundamental link between brands and consumers. It's the foundation of the relationship, not a layer. It is the foundation of the advertising and marketing campaign."

Social media can also be finessed to build trust between consumers and brands. Glimpsing most brands' Facebook pages will show a well-maintained social platform that is frequently updated with information on product launches, corporate news and press detailing good deeds the brand engages in. The same goes for brands' Twitter feeds. Many brands update multiple times a day and actively engage with their consumers. Was the bathroom at the Olive Garden where you had lunch particularly dirty, for instance? Tweet at the company. When Olive Garden tweets back a simple "Sorry!" or "We'll fix that," they are doing more than addressing a problem. They are establishing a relationship.

"Social media is restoring a lot of trust for brands. It's enabling them to respond in real time to their consumers,

to do crisis management better and customize messaging to speak to specific segments of consumers," says Newcomb. "But there is a huge hurdle for larger brands that need to deal with the challenges of the freewheeling effect social media brings to the table."

To that extent, bigger brands generally have a harder time navigating the social ecosystem.

"Working with a smaller brand, you see a lot of the decision makers and the ones who shape the voice of the brand are much more accessible and are able to communicate with their consumers. Smaller brands are usually younger and more comfortable with empowering their employees to use social media," Newcomb says. "For larger brands, it's a more difficult challenge. Their internal politics are usually one of the largest obstacles they face. They can leverage influencers and establish connections with social media to help establish trust."

THE CONSUMER AS SLEUTH

Of course, perception is not just based upon how brands interact with consumers through social media. Nowadays, anyone can find virtually everything about a company through a few clicks and keywords.

"Consumers are more aware of how to access both sides of the story, and they listen. In the past, traditional

A Chinese factory producing Apple products

media stories were reported by news organizations so corporations were put on the defensive," says Myers. "Now, corporations can be proactive and more in control of their message directly with the consumer. There is no third party to interpret that message."

Germano sees the good in the new transparency era: "There is nowhere to hide anymore. It doesn't matter. You don't have control anymore, but what it also allows for is for people to open up and explore."

In 2011, it was not uncommon for companies to release sustainability reports, indicating many companies' desire to resonate with consumers' desires for eco-friendly products.

Consumers now feel that it is their own responsibility to complete their due diligence so it lets a company put its best face forward, if you will.

That's especially true of younger people. The consumers who really demand

brand transparency are 25-and-under Millennials who grew up with high-speed Internet and online news sources. They're not only savvy consumers, but they are also caring consumers. They won't stand for their companies mistreating their employees, their customers or the environment. And if there are any accusations of such behavior, the Millennial consumer will find it. There really is nowhere to hide, but that doesn't spell bad news for brands.

"The consumers who have grown up to be mistrustful of brands tend to be over 25. They have different needs than consumers who have grown up with the Internet as part of their lives," says Myers. "They've grown up with a trust in brands – they tend to give them the benefit of the doubt. These younger consumers are open to response from companies before they make judgment."

"In terms of brands, you're starting to see a great-

er sense of trust with those brands that actively engage in a conversation with their consumers," adds Newcomb.

But more than trusting that brands are on the up-and-up, the young consumer has specific needs that new brands are catching on to, namely social interests and will do extensive research before making a purchase.

Environmental concerns, of course, are a big issue. But increasingly, consumers want to know about the company's fair-trade policies and employment record.

"I think that consumers are able to now really dig into a brand to find out if it satisfies all the things they consider valuable," says Germano. "With digital, you don't have an excuse to not say where your company stands. There are no ad dollars going into it."

The moral of the story for Germano? "Social media is great for good brands, and social media is horrible for bad brands." Ⓜ

Is Gen Y Sick of Tech?

Surprise: The evidence is building that the majority of consumers — especially Millennials — want less technologically-enhanced digital "connectedness." Euro RSCG's Tom Morton explains the trend

BY KARL GREENBERG

They are not happy about where the world is going, and they are suspicious of digital technology. More than half of them think everyone should stop sharing personal thoughts and experiences online; they believe society needs to reestablish its privacy boundaries.

No, these aren't members of the William Gibson fan club. Nor are they the rumblings of some militia hunkering down in the woods of Idaho. Rather, these sentiments reflect the view of the mainstream, a broad group from around the world polled by Euro RSCG Worldwide. The firm has completed a major global study — a first — with Market Probe International, polling 7,213 adults in 19 countries about their opinion of technology and the future.

Millennials might be the most cynical of all demographics, with 70 percent of them believing today's youth have less privacy. The study found that a third of Millennials, versus a quarter of everyone polled, assert social networking is making them less satisfied with their own lives. They also said that they are jealous of the lives they're seeing others lead via Facebook and other sites. Forty percent sometimes feel they're wasting their lives.

While only 10 percent said they believe digital technology will have a negative effect overall on the world, a much bigger percentage said they felt the jury is still out: 42 percent believe it's too soon to tell. Half the sample worries that digital technology and multitasking are impairing our ability to think deeply and to concentrate on one task at a time. Around two-thirds believe society has become too shallow, focusing too much on things that don't really matter.

Tom Morton, chief strategic officer of Euro RSCG New York and co-chief strategy officer of Euro RSCG North America, says respondents are articulating first a fear that social media and online data collection are chiseling away at one's right to privacy; and second, that hyperconnectivity is actually making us feel less connected. He says over half worry that digital communica-

tion is weakening human-to-human bonds.

A majority of those polled said they are tired of over-consuming and are looking to scale back and live more simply. Forty percent said they would be happier if they owned less stuff. Nearly three-quarters of respondents around the world are moderately to extremely worried about the growing gap between rich and poor. Euro RSCG's comments after the study was published last month were that people will find a balanced life, where the "Web consciousness" (my term, I think) doesn't efface one's involvement with planet Earth. Morton speaks to MediaPost about the study and offers some not-so-dour insights.

Who are the respondents? Were they a socioeconomic cross section?
Working with research partner Market Probe International, we fielded the online quantitative survey among 7,000 respondents in 19 countries around the world. The overall sample is 51 percent male, 49 percent female. The median age is 34, with 51 percent between the ages of 18 and 34, 34 percent ages 35-54, and 15 percent age 55+.

I'm guessing advertisers might not be terribly happy to hear this kind of news. But what should advertisers do besides wring their hands and wish they had gotten into the jazz scene or become actors? After all, every marketer on earth, whether they are selling cars or flapjacks, are after data, and want to turn citizens into "brand advocates."
Clearly, you haven't seen our jazz hands; that's going to be our Act II. There are two things we know about social media users:

They're anxious about the possibility of privacy breaches and unhappy about ceding so much control to absolute strangers. And yet most of them have absolutely no intention of staying off social networking and other online sites.

Some may shut down their Facebook pages from time to time — but the draw of communication, connection and self-expression is powerful. In any case, it doesn't actually appear to be advertisers that they're scared of. People have little reason not to like targeted communications when they're genuinely helpful — when they're steering the person toward a product or brand or site that is of interest or of use to them, when the algorithm doesn't spew out some clumsy piece of over-targeting.

That's actually quite a change from the early days of the Internet, when an advertising banner was considered a sacrilege — an incursion into what many considered their personal space. That was before the Internet became one big shopping mall, before people began to figure out how handy it is to compare notes with other shoppers online, and before social media became integral to our everyday living. It was also before brand communications became a two-way street, with consumers playing an infinitely greater role in brand building.

The message advertisers need to take from our study is that we'd be stupid to take this level of (oftentimes begrudging) acceptance for granted. Lurking underneath all this casual transference of information are feelings of uncertainty and doubt. Virtually everyone we know is sharing information online. We've shared tons of information ourselves without anything bad happening. But we all know there's potential for something to go awry.

That's what we need to pay heed to. We need to respect the information in our archives — first and foremost, by keeping it safe. We need to be transparent about who we are and how and why we're using information. We need to give people reasons to want to connect with us online. And we also need to give people reasons to want that connection to be public — to be happy to be associated with our clients' companies and brands because there is something in that connection to be proud of.

Aren't the results of this study likely to be deeply troubling to agency creatives and marketers paid to fashion language for, say, tech companies? Some of these results suggest people are getting cynical about terms like "empowerment," "freedom," "personalization" and "community" as applied to the Web and Web-connected and mobile devices. At some point, aren't the Apples, Samsungs, etc., of the world going to have to get a bit more nuanced?

I don't think it's accurate to suggest that Web devices are responsible for curtailing freedom or crushing community life. There are all sorts of factors that have had an effect on community over the past few decades, ranging from longer commutes to work and increased mobility to more women in the workforce. What Web technologies *have* done is further increase an already faster pace of living and make it easier to create a "human interaction lite" way of living.

The truth is, digital technologies *are* empowering, they *do* increase personal freedom, they *do* afford greater personalization, and they *can* enhance people's sense of community. It's all in how you use them. The findings from the Digital Life study suggest that it will be in marketers' interests to find way to help consumers use these technologies in a way that creates these sorts of advantages rather than detracting from them.

While I understand the hybrid lifestyle argument, and have read about it elsewhere — that people will find a happy medium — I'm wondering if part of the study results suggest a big backlash against the joys of social media: that citizens who manage to get free of the screens will also become a lot less likely to want anything to do with brands trying to employ them as "fans," "friends" and whatnot online. There may well be some born-again Luddites who take offense at advertising that tries to lure them back into the clutches of modern technology. But, really, how many are there going to be? Fifteen years ago, it took a bit of effort to get online and become a part of this nascent world. Today, it would require a huge effort to stay away from it. Think how many of us have jobs that would be impossible to do today without digital technologies, including social media. Living off-grid is never going to be more than a backlash for a few.

And, depending on what age you are, a big part of your social communication — and even your *social life* — likely takes place online. We're all receiving e-vites rather than phone calls or printed invitations to parties. Many of us are connecting with friends from high school and college and earlier jobs exclusively online.

People who consciously withdraw from the social media sphere may not want to "fan" Pepsi or Nike on Facebook, but I don't see why they would resent the request any more than they would have resented an invitation to enter a branded sweepstakes or other contest in which they weren't interested a couple of decades ago. We're all incredibly good at screening out information and come-ons that aren't relevant or of interest to us. This will just be more of the same.

At the same time, there will be opportunities to connect with people who are hungry for face-to-face interaction and a stronger sense of being part of a community based on common interests. Look at how Nike+ brings runners together online and then extends that to real-world running partnerships and races. One thing we know for sure is that having a good-works component will continue to be a big draw for any brand. Kickstarter, Just Giving and Pepsi's Refresh project thrive on people's desire to do some tangible good for others through an online exchange.

But isn't the "happy balance" idea just wishful thinking to some extent? Not to be too dystopic, but there must be a movement (based on books and movies) of people who think humans will end up plugged in all the time. Isn't the Internet addictive? And while people may have moments of remorse, they will "jack in" to the Web and forget all about it. But maybe I feel this way because I just read *Neuromancer*. I wouldn't frame it in terms of addiction. What we tried to express in our "Prosumer Report" on the survey is that people absolutely are not intending to make any sort of permanent break from digital technology. It's becoming such an integral part of people's lives (socially

and at work) that it's a conscious choice to take a short break from it. We've all had that feeling of panic when we realize we've left our phone behind. That's reliance, not addiction.

We've seen stories about companies that have instituted no-email days, forcing employees to pick up the phone or, you know, actually walk down the hall to speak to a colleague. There's a growing understanding that our work lives and personal lives will benefit from some techno downtime. And I think we'll see more companies catering to this. In Sweden, telecom company Telia offers a free download that disables Internet use at home. Sure, some people may use it to keep their kids offline, but others need that extra boost to keep themselves away from the Internet.

This is just the beginning of what will be a growing conversation about the place of digital technologies in our lives and to what extent, if any, we need to curb their reach.

More exclusive clubs, restaurants and resorts already have "No Cell Phone" policies; it will be interesting to see whether society as a whole will absolutely give in to new technologies or begin a bit of pushback. I think we'll definitely see some of the latter, coming from all sorts of sectors — and aided and abetted by marketers who recognize that lots of their customers are looking for a bit of a nudge to help them get off the grid from time to time.

What will the always-connected world look like, and is that what marketers want, ultimately?
I don't think that marketers are aiming for the precision-targeted, 24/7, mind-meld with their customers that you're suggesting. The most useful always-on connection won't be a constant stream of offers and messages from a brand to a consumer; it will be a quieter stream of customer data that allows a brand to tweak its services in order to be more useful to the user. Mint.com is a good example. The CEO of Mint has spoken about how every debit card transaction generates 120 fields of data, but most banks are only interested in the one field that says whether the customer has enough money in their account to cover the transaction. Think how many more useful services you could generate with those other 119 fields.

And the types of connections that brands create are just as important. It's all about creating meaningful connections that impact the consumer's life in a positive way — whether it's by creating a fun experience, offering information, creating interpersonal connections, letting them get involved in building the brand or something else. Given that people prefer to spend time with brands that they like and admire, brands need to act in a more "human" way — including not making excessive demands on customers who need little more than a low-level transactional relationship with a brand, and respecting that customers aren't exactly hoping for a future where brands can beam promotional messages onto their retinas.

Again, we're not talking about a total digital disconnect; we're simply saying that plugged-in consumers around the globe are showing signs of dissatisfaction and a desire to create a bit more balance in their lives. It's hard to imagine a downside for a brand that can help its customers live well. Ⓜ

Same Show, Different Accent

OMMA Mobile Is Going to London

OMMA MOBILE EUROPE

CONSUMERS ARE ADOPTING MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AT A FAST PACE – OFTEN FASTER THAN MARKETERS CAN KEEP UP WITH, AND IN WAYS NOT EVEN THE MOST SKILLFUL MARKETERS ANTICIPATED. WITH THE INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT BLAZING, AND WITH BIG MEDIA BUDGETS HEADED ITS WAY, IS MOBILE READY FOR PRIME TIME?

SEPTEMBER 18, 2012
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MARKETING AS 3-D CHESS

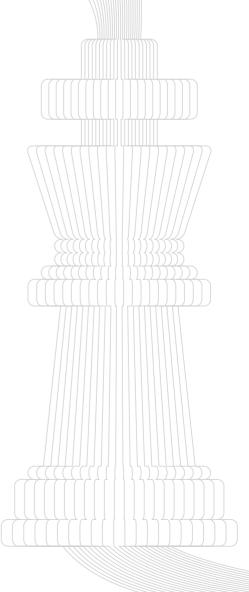*Integrating consumers' "always-on" mindset into brand strategy* **BY DAN NEELY**

Winning companies today are defined not just by their product and service offerings, but by the manner in which they respond to the needs of their consumers in the new digital world. But this wasn't always the case. Not long ago, brands were capable of influencing preference primarily through advertising. For many consumer brand marketers, there was perceived correlation between media buys and sales. That environment no longer exists and marketing professionals are now asking what's next.

When you look at the methods brands traditionally used to understand consumer behavior, develop marketing strategies, plan campaigns, evaluate tactics and measure performance, some of these processes are 50 years old! Despite the enhancements in technology and communications, market research has long been a labor-intensive endeavor. Today's "Always-On" competitive environment has proved that the technology and techniques brands relied on are limited and difficult to scale. However, and some might say finally, innovation has arrived that enables marketing professionals to keep their finger on the pulse of their target consumer as expressed in digital form across the Web.

Welcome to the era of "Always-On" marketing. Now people are always within arm's length of a Web-enabled device that connects them to your business whenever they want. With this enhanced capability comes the new expectation that you'll be responsive on the consumer's terms. For businesses, the "Always-On" era also means the days of treating marketing in discrete campaigns is behind us. This means marketing professionals who thrive on a continuous state of optimizing their investments will be the winners in this new environment.

Brands are making the shift from advertising to more engagement-focused marketing models; as a result traditional measurement of performance will need to evolve and become more sophisticated. But rather than looking for new standards to develop around engagement, or methodologies to build digital word-of-mouth, brands must develop models that work for their customers. In this "Always-On"

climate, adaptive brands have discovered they need to tailor the evolving media landscape to meet their needs and employ social media, along with targeting technologies, to deliver marketing messages that inspire action and loyalty.

There is no greater signal for change than diminishing returns. Brands across all sectors are discovering mass marketing techniques are becoming less effective and more expensive. Their target consumers are often more nimble and technologically savvy than the brand. Companies now understand the promise and peril of managing brand advocates and detractors through engagement. However, many are still looking for a silver-bullet solution rather than building processes that put the consumer at the center of all decision-making.

Consumers are smarter and more equipped to challenge brands than ever before. The buyer's journey has advanced, making sale conversions difficult, turbulent and competitive. Brands must manage a new path-to-purchase where a few key players influence consideration and preference every day. Increasingly consumers are saying "yes, and …" when it comes to brands, and their current value proposition opens the door for innovative dimensions that contribute to brand value.

Exceptional adoption rates of innovative technologies in the areas of content creation, delivery and marketing have altered audience behaviors and fragmented an already depleted attention span. The weakening signal strength of traditional media is a result of the tidal wave of new media choices — some from consumers themselves. These new technologies are also changing how consumers discover media, entertainment and advertising. This is the new norm: "Always-On" marketing.

In a world where everyone is a publisher, a network and a marketer how do brands become the signal within all the noise? The short answer is delivering authentic and remarkable experiences that inspire brand advocates to influence peers to become customers. The role media plays in the new marketing mix as it supports peer-to-peer advertising is uncertain. But what we know today is the answer will be different for each brand — even in the same category.

Media will always play a role in acquisition, conversion and retention for marketing professionals. The shift that's occurring today with brands is the pursuit to find a healthier balance when it comes to traditional media planning and buying. For some organizations, this is fueled by a desire to maximize ROI, and for others it's inspired by a belief that understanding your audience through social data will allow them to make more efficient marketing decisions. For a company like Samsung, it was about taking away market share from Apple, and they used social data from their target audience to guide how they developed marketing programs that allowed them to ship more units globally than Apple in the first quarter of 2012.

Today marketing executives might feel as if they're at the mercy of the consumer and the waves of technological change, but that won't last forever. What is occurring is similar to a stock market correction; instead, in this case, it's a company's values and priorities that are finding a new balance. What isn't changing is the brand's desire to find harmony with their consumers, and the customers' desire to have consistent quality experiences. In the "Always-On" age, less authentic brands and lower quality products will find it harder to survive.

One might ask in today's connected world with the consumer in the driver's seat: "Does marketing matter?" The truth is it's needed now more than ever to cut through much of the white noise that brands, consumers and the media are guilty of creating.

This new era has been led by consumers, who are voting with their attention, dollars and social resonance. This "Always-On" marketing metamorphosis isn't all bad since new technologies bring enhanced capabilities in the areas of segmentation and targeting. Understanding customer profiles enables more relevant messages and compelling offerings. That allows for improved conversions and increased efficiency. But this isn't possible unless you put the consumer, and his digital footprint, at the center of decision-making. Savvy brands are leveraging big data, much of it social data, to create predictive marketing models or capitalize on trends as they're occurring.

Winning new business will require a fresh approach to developing and managing business systems and people processes. A culture of iteration and optimization will allow companies to become more agile and stay synchronized with a market segment. New tools in the areas of communications, analytics, and CRM will make it easier to discover trends and apply insights into marketing programs that will be tailored to meet the needs of a variety of consumer personas. The results are campaigns that work in real-time to fine-tune messaging, communication channel and call-to-action to reach desired performance metrics and conversion goals.

ALL THAT'S REQUIRED TO GET STARTED IS A COMMITMENT TO REDUCE DATAFREE DECISION-MAKING

I often tell clients that change is inevitable, and you have the choice to either drive change within your organization or to be what your organization wants to change. As an analytics partner for marketing teams at Fortune 500 brands, and their agencies, I can share that the era of optimizing media through real-time data is upon us, and all that's required to get started is a commitment to reduce data-free decision-making. Once you embrace the choice to rid your media investments of waste, you're on the path to discovering what we call the "minimal effective amount of media spend." Along the way, you'll experiment with new tactics and tools — largely fueled by performance and social data — that allow you to stay in sync with the trends of your target consumer so that you may be present in the media channels where they're most receptive to your message. Optimization is another way to say survival of the fittest and in our new "Always-On" reality, expensive marketing decisions are slowly becoming extinct. Ⓜ

Not Pull, Not Push. *Plush.*

Consumers are longing for fewer digital choices that do more

BY PATRICK REYNOLDS

On my way to Las Vegas and thinking about media and how technology has changed it utterly and forever.

In the beginning, it was all so easy. The newspaper was on the stoop. You read it. There were a couple of radio stations you could listen to on the way in to work. So you did. When you got home, there were three stations to choose from to watch the news. You picked one. After doing the dishes, there were the same three or four stations you'd watch until bedtime.

Wash. Rinse. Repeat.

The Dawn of Pull

Enter content emancipation. Now you could exercise some choice. If you couldn't watch your favorite show at 8 p.m., you could TiVo it and watch it at your leisure. Soon you could watch it on your iPad or laptop, courtesy of Hulu. You were large and in charge.

Social media further expanded this power. You could choose who to engage with and who could engage with you. It was the high-school lunch table gone digital. In terms of music, you became the DJ. You listened to what you wanted when you wanted — usually in the private Idaho of headphones.

Then you went off to college, shot out of a cannon. You started signing up for and trying everything (maybe I'm projecting). You followed thousands and were followed by dozens. Your newsfeed pinged you every seven seconds with one thing or another. You were so in and of the NOW.

The Dusk of Push

Fast forward. It's 2012, and you're choking on all your choice. You certainly don't want to go back to the bad old days of being "talked at," but surely there's some compromise, some détente between Push and Pull. Your inbox is stuffed. You get texts from companies you've never heard of. You have five music services that you rifle through daily forgetting where your favorite playlist was hatched. Your iPad has eight pages of apps — two dedicated to social media "simplifiers." A recent study (published on Mashable) indicates that content overload and too much access to too much information is actually depressing us and making us less effective than we were in the Luddite days of mass media.

Help.

So you begin dropping out. Every third email you mark "spam." You delete apps with reckless abandon and considerable joy. You yearn to live life as a digital Spartan. You're tired of Search, tired of being sought.

The Rise of "Plush"

There is a porridge that's just right. There's a place between state-controlled and anarchy. New curation services are killing off the first-gen open spigots in favor of Intelligent Design of information flow. Facebook's acquisition of Instagram

> YOU YEARN TO LIVE LIFE AS A DIGITAL SPARTAN. YOU'RE TIRED OF SEARCH, TIRED OF BEING SOUGHT

is just another example of fewer trusted resources doing more. Spotify is adding more "stations," so you don't have to do all the programming. Google has got its arms around all the information in the known world and has organized it so you can access it (whether or not you know how to spell or type) effortlessly. Next it will begin to parse it out to you before you know you need it in digestible nuggets that won't give you heartburn. Sit back. Relax.

Technology is not all good. Media is not all evil. Like most of us, both are basically good — with a little devil in them. Ⓜ

Patrick Reynolds is executive vice president of marketing for Triton Digital Media, and lives in Boston.

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Rediscovering Media's Lost Generation

How the digital transformation of Gen Y forced marketing and media to break up, and what can bring them together again

BY SARAH MAHONEY

In most ways, marketers are no different than they were last year, last decade or even last century: They sell stuff. It's the media they rely on to do that selling that is in disarray, reinventing itself faster than the speediest algorithms. Few companies have managed to keep up with the digital explosion, let alone get ahead of it. In a very real way, these companies have lost their audiences, especially digital natives. *MEDIA* asked Doug Ray, president of Carat USA, for his take on that widening disconnect, and what marketers need to do to rediscover their audiences in an era of still-increasing digital dissonance.

Who is the most elusive audience right now? Is it still young men?
We work on Red Bull, Adidas, Diageo and Gillette, and what's interesting is that these young men are significant multitaskers. They are doing more than ever before, and as convergence continues to roll out, they are adapting to their devices, giving them the seamless ability to connect with brands. But it's also a distraction. We're seeing the lowest levels of attentiveness. It's like channel flipping on TV, but that is playing out in the digital space.

The idea of dusting off last year's media plan and tweaking it a little is absolutely a dinosaur. Even looking at last month's media plan and updating it won't work for this audience.

Are they ever completely unreachable?
We have a CPG company that was trying to sell a product to men in a new category. One segment of young men was very receptive. But the target audience the client wanted was literally

Ray

blocking us out — they underindexed on everything. The only thing they did respond to was point-of-sale materials and couponing, but even that wouldn't be enough. So we told the client to focus on marketing the product to significant others — the wives and girlfriend who would buy the product for him.

Would you call them indifferent?
No! Even though they are elusive in a broad sense, they are incredibly passionate about what they care about most. So we are moving from being media planners to content planners, to take advantage of that. They'll engage in *Glee* or the Olympics or the World Cup, and they'll do it on a computer, a mobile device or a gaming console. To them, there is no such thing as TV.

So it's all about content they love?
Well, content that is fully atomized and distributable. Content needs to be transportable from screen to screen. I need to email it, to share it. And a brand can play a key role in attaching itself to content. To connect with a young ethnic audience, for example, our client Smirnoff created

Master of the Mix, a reality show to find great DJs.

Are young moms hard to reach?
This is another major change. Among Baby Boomers or even Gen X, the trusted resources were institutions — doctors, nurses, even brands. But for Millennial moms, the most trusted source is an experienced mom. From a media standpoint, that is why the rise of the Mommy Blogger is not just a PR vehicle, but a key part of the communications plan.

What is the biggest difference in reaching Gen Y?
It's not really about media or technology. It's about behavior. These consumers want to have a high level of involvement with brands. If we aren't inviting participation in our big ideas, we are not addressing the fundamental expectations of that audience.

I'm 42, and when I started out in this business, it was very much about the media, focusing on what was happening at NBC and *Time*. Now, it's all about understanding how people interact with brands. If we don't start with people, and put people at the center of our decision-making, we will never be able to recommend the right media.

Does that put more pressure on media planners and buyers?
Well, it certainly is up to us now to keep brands relevant. And that used to be the job of creative. But if we don't reach our audiences in a way that means something to them, we will lose relevance. And they will abandon us. Ⓜ

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