

Social Media Marketing

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Understanding the Social Media Movement and Its History

Innovations in Communication

- 1440 German inventor Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press.
- 1775 The United States Continental Congress established the postal system, linking colonial communications and fueling the American Revolution a year later.
- 1837 Samuel Morse began experimenting with the telegraph. By 1880, more than 32 million messages traveled between 12,000 telegraph offices connected by 291,000 miles of wire—facilitating the creation of national news networks, national financial markets, and national (as well as international) corporations.
- 1876 Alexander Graham Bell was awarded the U.S. patent for the invention of the telephone. Thirty years later, there are more than three million phones in the U.S. alone.
- 1993 The European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) announced that the World Wide Web was free for everyone.
- 1994 As a student at Swarthmore College, Justin Hall created the world's first personal blog.
- 2003 MySpace launched.
- 2004 Facebook launched.
- 2006 Twitter launched

Even though these events span hundreds of years, they have one thing in common—they connected people in a new manner. The printing press made literacy affordable and accessible to the middle classes. The postal service linked the colonies, aiding the organization of the American Revolution. The telegraph instantly connected organizations, cities and countries. Finally, individuals were connected with the telephone; then the World Wide Web took that connection to a higher level.

Modern blogs, forums and social networking sites follow in these innovative footsteps. Humans have an innate need to connect, and in 2009, it's easier to connect than at any other point in history.

So now that we're all connected, what the heck do we do?

The answer is what drives social media. The answer is you can order Pizza Hut from your Facebook page. You can resolve a customer service issue with Comcast on Twitter. Ultimately, the answer is: you can do whatever you want.

The power of social media gives the average person a voice and strength in numbers. Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff appropriately labeled this newly acquired mass influence "groundswell." Never have you and I had so much influence. We can shut down Web sites, expose media inaccuracies and reinvent marketing. We can raise record funds for charity, promote sustainability and elect a president. We really can do whatever we want.

What will you do?

Reading this Interactive White Paper

Intent

The purpose of this white paper is to provide readers with an introduction and basic understanding of social media and social media marketing. I encourage anyone who is developing a social media marketing plan or simply interested in the topic to use the resources provided at the end of this white paper to learn more from the industry's best.

Interactive Links

Selected text is highlighted in blue throughout the white paper, indicating that clicking on the text will take you to a Web site relevant to the discussed topic. Images, screen shots, logos, Google keywords and URLs are also hyperlinked.

White Paper Availability

The interactive PDF will be available for free download at www.markwanczak.com.

Feedback and Contact

I would love to hear your thoughts, ideas and criticisms regarding the advice in this white paper. You can contact me via e-mail at Mark.Wanczak@gmail.com or on Twitter [@Energy_Geek](https://twitter.com/Energy_Geek).

Participating in the Social Media Movement

Introduction

The Internet provides unrivaled freedom. Choose an interest and a medium, and there's a Web site that allows you to share with the world. When we create content using any of the following tools, it's known as user-generated content. When we connect with others and share information, it's known as social networking. What follows is a brief summary of the common forms and outlets of user-generated content and social networking.

Blogs

Simply put, a blog is an online journal or diary that allows users to have their thoughts and ideas accessible to anyone, anywhere, any time. Blogs are free and easy to use for anyone with a basic understanding of computers. Initially, blogs were limited to individuals. But over the past few years, company blogs have created a new form of executive expression—corporate blogging.

A well-executed company blog can improve customer outreach, establish an online personality, bolster search engine rankings and increase Web site traffic. More than any other tool, a blog can have a variety of positive effects on a brand. Establishing a blog on your site can serve as a personable, up-to-date online resource for your audience(s). This is a space where you can express your expertise and offer personal service. Content does not and should not have to be exclusively promotional. For example, companies may use a blog to discuss industry trends, promote key events or engage other relevant blogs. This can establish a relationship not only with your target audience, but also with industry peers.

There are a variety of free blogging platforms available online, including stand-alone platforms and ones that integrate with an existing Web site. Ideally, you should integrate your blog into your company Web site so users won't have to leave the site to read the blog.

Blogs can be as formal or casual as you'd like. A corporate blog should reflect the company's personality and serve as an online extension of the brand or the representative authoring the content. An effective blog is updated at least two to three times a week to build and maintain readership.

The collective voices of the bloggers in the South By Southwest (SXSW) blogger lounge is more powerful and has more influence than The Wall Street Journal.

David Meerman Scott
webinknow.com

Free Blogging Platforms

Wordpress.com
Blogger.com
Blogster.com
Livejournal.com
Typepad.com

Participating in the Social Media Movement

Twitter

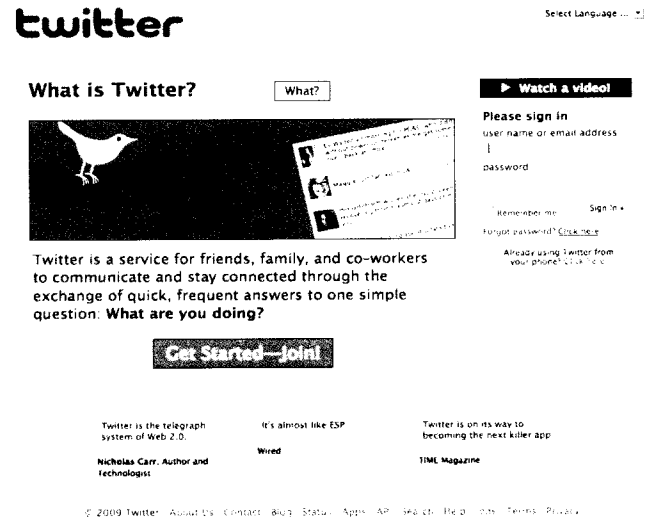
Twitter is a micro-blogging platform that allows users to share information in 140-character messages. In 2008, Twitter was recognized as the fastest growing Web site, a testament to its effectiveness at connecting people. Everyone from Microsoft and Ford to coffee shops and bars uses Twitter as an online brand-building tool.

Twitter is free and simple to use. After signing up for an account and choosing a username, you seek out people you'd be interested in learning more about based on their profile and 140-character messages, also called tweets. This may include existing customers, clients or audience members. Others on Twitter also have the option of following you—Twitter's version of befriending you—to see what you're talking about in your tweets, thus, indirectly learning more about you or your company.

Much like a blog, Twitter is a great tool for sharing your thoughts on the latest industry trends and news. However, your tweets should not be strictly promotional; people will be less likely to follow you if this is the case. To understand how to better use Twitter, think of it as a giant cocktail party. If someone is standing there constantly shouting sale prices and company news, no one will want to listen or engage with him. To be successful on Twitter, people need to learn from you and be able to participate in a two-way discussion with you.

Twitter is not just a way to tell the world what you had for breakfast.

@jmarbach



Participating in the Social Media Movement

Facebook

Facebook is the United States' most popular social networking site. It continues to evolve, adding more features for both the individual user and brands. Fan pages give anyone the ability to create a Facebook profile for a specific product or brand. For example, Dusty Sorg and Michael Jedrzejewski created a Facebook fan page for Coca-Cola, which now has 33 million fans.

The thing is, Sorg and Jedrzejewski are not Coca-Cola employees. Eventually, Sorg and Jedrzejewski's fan page became so popular, Coca-Cola stepped in and began a collaborative administrative effort.

Facebook fan pages can serve as an effective communication tool, giving brands the ability to reach brand loyalists who volunteer to be contacted.

MySpace

MySpace once dominated the social networking universe but is declining in popularity as Facebook continues to grow. MySpace's fall from the top doesn't necessarily mean it's not a useful outlet for social media marketing; it still has 55 million unique visitors each month.

However, MySpace isn't adapting and growing like Facebook. Largely unchanged during the last few years, MySpace remains influential for artists, especially bands and musicians. Older demographics are not signing up for MySpace like they are with Facebook, calling the site's longevity into question. Additionally, MySpace doesn't offer the support for brands that Facebook provides, making it less accommodating for corporate social media strategies.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is part digital Rolodex, part social networking site. To younger audiences, LinkedIn is the professional version of Facebook. One main difference is that LinkedIn is less about corporate branding and more about personal branding, a topic for a different white paper. Companies have minimal engagement opportunities on the site, as they are limited to simple profile pages. While LinkedIn is great for personal marketing, it's not intended for corporate marketing.

Podcasts

A podcast is essentially an Internet radio program. Much like blog posts, podcasts can be on a consistent schedule (daily, weekly, monthly). Topics and tactics vary, but many podcasts feature interviews with industry leaders or reviews of the latest news during a specific time period.

Podcasts can be downloaded from a Web site or through a media platform like iTunes. Listeners can use RSS (see page 11) to subscribe to podcasts, be notified of new podcasts and download the podcast.

Effectively, MySpace has been googled by Facebook for much of the same reason Google googled Yahoo. Facebook is cleaner, more intuitive, and has better features. Its members are rabid devotees who freak out at the slightest provocations. But they don't leave. They protest until things change. Facebook has loyalty MySpace never did.

Jason Lee Miller
webpronews.com

For more on MySpace's decline, Google: "MySpace shrinks Facebook"

Participating in the Social Media Movement

Media Sharing

While it's possible to host all your photos and videos on your own Web site, using third-party sites offers a few key advantages. Internet users browse popular media sharing sites like Flickr and YouTube looking for specific content. If your images or videos aren't posted on these sites, they may never be found, viewed or shared. Additionally, posting your content on media sharing sites creates more links back to your site, positively contributing to your site's search engine ranking.

YouTube

YouTube is the world's largest video sharing site and fourth largest search engine. It allows users to post and share videos with the rest of the world. Most successful viral videos first appear on YouTube, which provides easy methods of video sharing outside of the site. This includes embedding videos into blog posts, a popular tactic that supplements the post with a video without taking users away from your site.

Flickr

Flickr is a free online photo-sharing site where you can also connect with friends. While Flickr is just one example of dozens of similar photo sharing sites, it is currently the most popular and well searched. The main point of a photo-sharing site is to provide another resource for followers to learn more about your company.

Niche Social Networks

Many new social networks are popping up, created specifically for a specialized niche. Moms have social networks allowing them to connect and share ideas and issues relevant to parenting. Construction and green building professionals have networks to keep tabs on the latest laws and regulations pertinent to their businesses.

Niche social networks are quickly growing and will continue to be a trend that deserves our attention as marketers. Say your company offers a product or service that makes a mother's life easier. Traditional marketing may include advertising in relevant home or parenting publications or during particular television shows. While you may be marketing in the right direction, you don't have the direct coordinates to the specific niche of only moms.

A niche social network provides your company with the unique opportunity to speak directly to your audience. One tactic may be to have a company representative join the online community and learn about the needs and concerns of your audience. Then, offer advice when your company can help.

The point is to be part of the community and its conversations, not a company talking at the network. But you should still be transparent in your participation. Label yourself as a marketing representative from your company and offer to provide assistance in any way possible.

Working with Companies New to Social Media

You've been hearing about social media for a while now. You think your company, product or service can benefit from what social media has to offer. Great! Here's what you need to know before you start talking strategy and implementation.

Common Questions

Be prepared to face a few questions when presenting social media to others. While the goal of this white paper is to help you answer these questions, the question samples below are by no means applicable in every situation. I encourage you to use the resources provided at the end of the white paper to learn more and develop your own answers.

- What is social media?
- Why does social media matter to us?
- Who else is using social media?
- Can't we just have an intern start a blog?

For more advice on key questions from one of the industry's most respected leaders, Google: "Chris Brogan aligning."

Obstacles

It's sometimes difficult for those stuck in traditional marketing methodologies to understand how social media is used to sell products or increase your bottom line. This is because social media represents a major shift in marketing philosophy and power, and not just a new avenue for brand messaging.

Emerging phrases such as new marketing and inbound marketing seem scary to the traditional marketer, but these are not just trends. They are required reading. Check out Seth Godin's Meatball Sundae and HubSpot's blog for more.

Transparency

When you think of social media marketing, think transparency. Everything on the Web is permanent, and Google never forgets. If your company deceives its customers, lies about the chemicals in its products or hires five-year-olds in Indonesia, someone online will find out about it and expose you. Scary, huh? What if this happens and your company has no online presence to swiftly and appropriately respond? Even scarier.

As a result, huge brands like Microsoft, Dell and Ford use social media every day, which means you can too. What these brands do well is understand and exercise transparency. Whether you're leaving a comment on a blog or starting a Twitter account, be upfront and let everyone know you're with a company. Most users are happy to interact with brands, as long as you clearly label yourself as such.

Customers, prospects and peers are discussing your brand, your industry and your competitors right now in social media: with or without you. Unfortunately, choosing not to listen doesn't make those conversations go away. Actively listening means protecting brand reputation, discovering opportunities, staying competitive and avoiding runaway crisis'.

David Alston
radian6.com/blog

To see how quickly social media can spread news about your brand, Google: "Note to Dominos Pizza."

Working with Companies New to Social Media

Risks

Participating in social media means being part of the conversation. Being part of the conversation means people can publicly talk about your company. Opening your company up for criticism is a big risk. What if someone trashes your latest product or complains about your customer service? With social media, your customers have a voice that can be heard by hundreds, thousands or even millions of people.

But so do you. The only way to level the playing field is to get in the game yourself. People may already be trashing your latest product and complaining about your customer service. Are you responding? How?

Digital technologies have made media more personal and more accessible. The brands with a face behind them are the ones emerging as the most trusted. They're the ones building followings of users in a way that encourages transparency and authenticity. They're also connecting their users in meaningful ways and building followings behind shared ideas. They are tomorrow's big successes and the people/brands with real influence.

Adam Singer
thefuturebuzz.com

Those who ignore the party/conversation/network when they are content and decide to drop in when they need the network may not succeed. It's pretty easy to spot those that are just joining the network purely to take—not to give. Therefore, be part of the party/conversation/network before you need anything from anyone.

Jeremiah Owyang
web-strategist.com

Return on Investment (ROI)

Perhaps the most commonly asked question in social media marketing is, what's the ROI? The problem is that everyone seems to have a different answer. Some say social media marketing is immeasurable or that it shouldn't be measured using traditional standards. Others say everything is measurable.

The truth is that the metrics and analytics used to influence social media marketing's ROI are constantly evolving. What is not measurable today may be six months from now. Many of the blogs listed at the end of the white paper tackle the ROI question in different ways. I recommend reading as many opinions as possible and forming your own.

Analyzing Your Audience for Social Media Marketing

The number one rule of marketing is know your audience. This applies to social media just as much as it does an advertising campaign. Sure, social networks are growing at wild rates, but that doesn't necessarily mean your audience uses these channels.

Approach social media marketing as you would any other strategic marketing initiative and gather the appropriate research to determine the best ways to reach your audience. This includes three key areas: demographics, technology aptitude and online participation.

Demographics

Who are you targeting? Women over 55?

Did you know that the number of U.S. women over age 55 using Facebook grew by 175.3% from September 2008 through March 2009?

Use your company's market research or search the Web for general demographics. Research companies such as Forrester can also provide detailed data on your target audience.

Technology Aptitude

Is your audience technologically-savvy enough to be using Facebook or blogging? It's easy to claim that everyone is online, but being online has different meanings. Checking e-mail is one thing; sharing photos and tweeting is another.

**Blog policy at Microsoft is just two words:
Blog Smart.**

Lawrence Liu
Telligent

Online Participation

Let's say your audience is 55+ women. You know they're on Facebook, so you should start a Facebook Fan Page and drive everyone to become a fan, right? Not necessarily. Facebook and other social networks have numerous engagement options. A user can use Facebook for years without clicking on an ad or following a brand or company.

Before implementing a social media strategy, understand how your audience participates online. Are women more likely to share links than men? Do men spend more time on Facebook or Myspace than women?



Do you sell camels? Social media might not be for you. For more, Google: "David Meerman Scott Camel"

Creating a Social Media Marketing Campaign

Getting to Know You

Before signing up for Twitter or launching a blog, a company needs to have a clear sense of what it wants to accomplish by using social media. Dozens of the country's biggest brands use social media, so learning more about their efforts can help sculpt yours. In addition to following the efforts of other brands, the most effective tactic a company can perform before entering the social media world is to simply listen.

Identify the channels most relevant to your business and monitor the conversation for a few weeks or months. Learn how people interact. Understand the taboos. Follow the progress of the most respected individuals in a particular area and consider how your company can use similar strategies once you enter the conversation. I can't stress this step enough. Part of social media is learning as you go, but having a foundation of the dos and don'ts will keep you from making mistakes that could cause irreversible damage to your brand.

Setting Goals

Like any other marketing initiative, you need to have a goal for your social media marketing plan. Most often a social media marketing plan complements a larger marketing strategy that serves a common goal. A goal should be realistic—you're probably not going to increase sales by 25 percent in three months. Instead, consider goals such as raising brand awareness, increasing brand loyalty or improving customer service.

Strategies and Tactics

Let's say your goal is to improve the perception of your customer service. The next step is to determine how to actually achieve that. Maybe your company will revise the messaging in its advertisements to appear more customer-focused and friendly. Your company has also been monitoring social media channels and wants to begin participating with this new campaign. Where do you start?

Take a step back and look at how customers have to contact you for a problem, complaint or even to praise you. Is the only option a frustrating automated phone system or static online contact form? You may want to develop a strategy for softening the customer service experience by using tactics such as establishing a corporate blog, creating a company Twitter account or creating an online customer service chat option.

Spread the news that these new options exist and begin to engage customers in each channel. If your efforts prove successful, satisfied customers will begin to spread the message.

Everything I do on the Web is based on the goal of extended human interactions.

Chris Brogan
chrisbrogan.com

For more on how Comcast uses social media for customer service, Google: "Comcast Social Media"

Monitoring, Measuring and Analyzing Your Campaign

Measuring the impact of your social media marketing efforts is a tough task. On one hand, everything on the Web is measurable. Stats such as page visits, bounce rates, time on site and click throughs can tell you a lot about your audience. You can extract trends and common interests to help you sculpt future efforts. While all this data is useful, it doesn't necessarily contribute to determining how much your efforts are worth.

Say your company's digital camera is featured on a popular electronics review blog. What is that exposure worth? How can you measure the impact of this placement? Is the money your company is spending to gain online exposure paying off? What is your return on investment (ROI)?

As I mentioned before, there are varying philosophies pertaining to social media ROI. The good news is that there are tools and measurements available to help you gauge the influence and importance of your social media successes.

While none of these tools alone can provide satisfactory keyword monitoring or tracking, a well-planned combination of these tools can give users an extensive, up-to-date view of what's being said across the Web.

Measurement Software & Tools

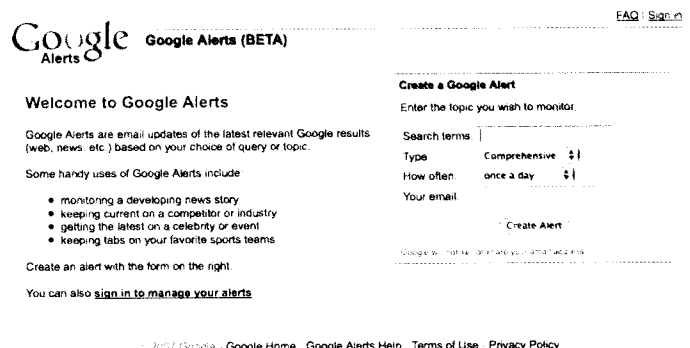
RSS

Many monitoring methods make use of a technology called Really Simple Syndication (RSS). On most blogs or news sites, you'll see an RSS button that allows you to be notified via e-mail every time a particular news feed or blog is updated. You're essentially digitally subscribing to a specific feed, just like you would a newspaper or magazine. Having a basic understanding of RSS and how it works will help you in your monitoring and tracking.



Google Alerts

Google Alerts is a free, easy-to-use keyword notification service. Choose keywords relevant to your company and set up alerts with Google, which will notify you via e-mail every time that keyword is picked up on Google's radar. The notification e-mail will contain a link to the Web site or page containing the keyword, allowing you to further investigate the context of the keyword's use.

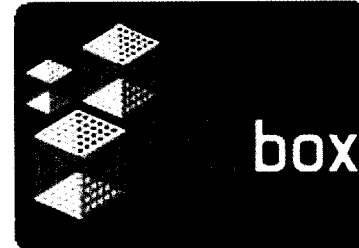


Monitoring, Measuring and Analyzing Your Campaign

Measurement Software & Tools (continued)

Filtrbox

Filtrbox is free online monitoring and tracking software. It uses multiple search sources and analyzation techniques to provide you with quantifiable search results. Filtrbox provides users with monitoring, aggregation and notifying tools.



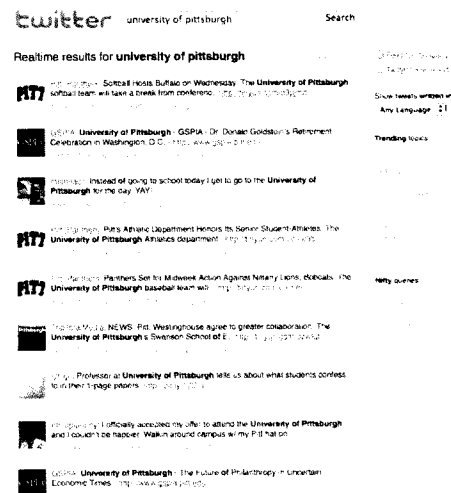
Technorati

Technorati is Google search, but for blogs. While Google has its own blog search, Technorati provides additional data useful for not only monitoring, but for value placement as well. When you go to the site, technorati.com, you'll see a search field allowing you to search the blogosphere for any keyword. If you type in University of Pittsburgh, for example, the results will be presented much like a Google search. In the top, right-hand corner of the page, you'll notice the RSS button, which will subscribe you to these results as they update. If a blogger posts new content tomorrow containing the keywords "University of Pittsburgh," you'll be notified via e-mail.



Twitter Search

We've covered the growing significance and influence of Twitter, so it's only natural to monitor it for relevant keywords. By visiting search.twitter.com, you'll see a search page much like any other. Type in your keyword and Twitter search will scan the tweets of all users for that phrase. As with Google or Technorati, you can choose to subscribe to these results.



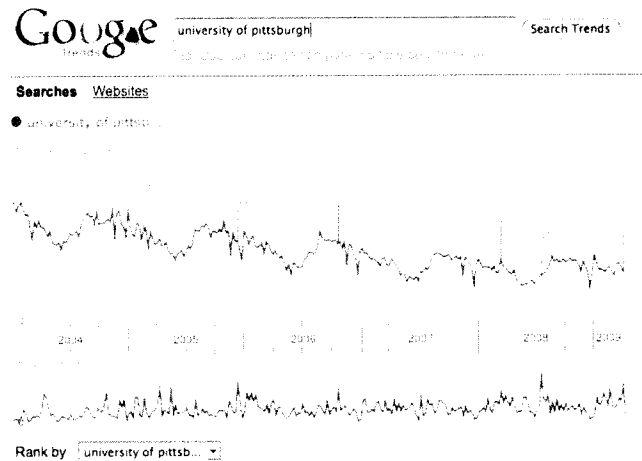
Monitoring, Measuring and Analyzing Your Campaign

If the first step is to collect the data, the next must be to make sense of what's being said, where, and what it means.

Analysis Tools

Google Trends

Google Trends is a free analysis service that provides users with data on how searches for a certain keyword have increased or decreased over a period of time. Understanding the growth or decline of keywords can help your social media efforts by showing you what hot topics you should target and what cold topics you should shy away from.



Third-Party Web Statistics Tools

Some sites provide users with free, basic Web site data without requiring access to a site's code or backend. Anyone can visit these sites, type in a Web site address and immediately receive data including unique visitors, rank and page views.

Third-party sites have their differences but essentially provide similar data. Users can take these statistics and better understand the popularity and influence of blogs or sites featuring their company or products.



Third-Party Web Statistics Tools

- Compete.com
- Alexa.com
- Dataopedia.com
- Quantcast.com

Measuring, monitoring and analyzing a social media marketing campaign

Analzyation Tools (continued)

Google Analytics

Google Analytics is a set of powerful tools providing users with important data about a particular Web site. Using Google Analytics (or similar paid software) to monitor a company's site is crucial to knowing your audience and your site's performance. There are many tutorials on using Google Analytics, but having a basic understanding of the data relevant to social media marketing is what I will cover here. The only way to access Google Analytics data is to set up an account and install a few lines of code on a site, which tells Google to scan and analyze your site.

One of Google Analytics' most relevant features for the purpose of this paper is the tracking of traffic sources. Every time a user comes to your site, there's a chance he or she arrived via a link on another Web page, and Google tracks this. When you examine the traffic sources to your site, you may see that a significant number of visitors came from a new blog post about your product. Thanks to Google Analytics, you can see how many people came to your site from that post, how long they stayed, how many pages on your site they visited and how many left the site after landing on the first page (bounce rate). These are all important statistics to consider when understanding the value of social media.

For example, say the University of Pittsburgh is mentioned by two different bloggers on completely different blogs. Blog A is a sports blog, references Pitt's participation in March Madness and links to Pitt's athletics page, pittsburghpanthers.com. Blog B is a university review blog, offering new high school grads unbiased information on hundreds of universities across the country.

Blog B's post discusses Pitt's excellent English program and links to the English Department's home page, english.pitt.edu. Using Google Analytics, you can show which blog placement is more valuable to the University of Pittsburgh. Visitors to Pitt's athletics site from Blog A are only interested in Men's Basketball. They may click on a few links, scan a few articles and leave. This will all be visible analytically in the site's statistics. Blog A visitors will have a low number of page views (they did not read many pages), low time spent on site (they were unengaged and/or did not find value in the content), and a high bounce rate (many visitors left after landing here and did not click anything).

The stats on Blog B's visitors will tell a different story. These visitors will have an immediate and relevant interest in the English Department. Page views will be higher as they click around to learn more about the Department. Time spent on site will be higher as they read content instead of scan it. Bounce rates will be lower because visitors want to know more than just what is presented on the home page.

Of course, these statistics only tell one side of the story. Visitors will come to a site based on links and interests, but site design and content can also have an enormous influence on whether they stay and explore. Google Analytics provides a large amount of data that will help you target your most popular visitors and optimize your site and social media efforts to better serve this audience.

Wrapping It All Up

Conclusion

Two years ago, major brands had never heard of Twitter or considered Facebook a marketing tool. Two years from now, there may be an entirely new set of tools that marketers rely on to engage consumers online.

The point is that keeping up with the evolving social media world takes effort. While the tools we use to connect and share may change, the philosophies and ideas these tools promote and spread will not.

We connect because we all benefit from sharing ideas and information. With social media, we have the ability to learn from our peers in a more immediate and efficient way than ever before. It's this community-minded approach that will continue to fuel the increasing popularity and power of social media in the future.

The social Web enables humanity to organize and collaborate over periods of time on complex projects previously not possible. The social Web is inspiring people the world over to pool their intellectual resources for good.

Adam Singer
thefuturebuzz.com

How much effort does it take to keep up with social media? To read an example of one professional's routine, Google: "my social media system"

Learning More—Social Media Resources

The resources listed below are meant to provide a jumping-off point for those new to social media.

Books

Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by
Social Technologies
Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff

The New Rules of Marketing and PR—How to Use
News Releases, Blogs, Podcasting, Viral Marketing,
and Online Media to Reach Buyers Directly
David Meerman Scott

Secrets of Social Media Marketing
Paul Gillin

Meatball Sundae
Seth Godin

The Essential Guide to Social Media (free e-book)
Brian Solis

Art of Listening and Engagement Through Social Media
(free e-book)
Brian Solis

Buying In: The Secret Dialogue Between What We Buy
and Who We Are
Rob Walker

Twitter

@Chrisbrogan
@Pistachio
@Marketingprofs
@Mashable
@JasonFalls
@Jowyang
@Cspenn
@AdamSinger
@Dmscott
@Armano

Blogs and Web sites

Seth Godin	sethgodin.typepad.com
Chris Brogan	chrisbrogan.com
David Meerman Scott	webinknow.com
Adam Singer	thefuturebuzz.com
Pistachio	pistachioconsulting.com
Groundswell	blogs.forrester.com/groundswell
Mashable	mashable.com
HubSpot	hubspot.com
Social Media Today	socialmediatoday.com
Peter Kim	beingpeterkim.com
David Armano	darmano.typepad.com

For a list of social media examples, Google:
"Peter Kim list of examples"