



Why use New Media: A Guide for Business

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The Emerge of New Media

The term BLOG is derived from two words: WEB and LOG. Combined, they offer opportunities for anyone to set-up a public or restricted journal.

After Real Simple Syndication technology introduced the 'Enclosure' tag as part of its syntax for sites to communicate updates, Podcasting in the form of audio or video became a reality.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) defines new media as, "Any digital media production that is interactive and digitally distributed." They make the distinction between "new" media and media on the basis of its accessibility and transmission and its interactive nature, which will be the most defining feature for future new media development. They also suggest there is an increase in use of internet, and an emphasis of integration of text, pictures, sound and video.

Further history and definition of this technology that is ironically based on technologies that are over 25 years old, therefore is the New in 'New Media' really a correct term to use (?) is available from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_media
The suggested drivers for this technology: Include:

Technology for an increasingly Participation based society

Expertise and Knowledge is still valued but there seems to be a move towards an understanding that true expertise lies in the collective rather than the individual. As

a result conversation and a sense of belonging is central in many forms of new media.

People want to interact with news and with the rise of technology they want an opportunity to even take part in its creation and reporting. The line between reporters and consumers of news and information has blurred as people participate in media more and more.

This communication of 'opinion' although having its roots in bulletin boards had now become more accessible / easy to use. Articles can now be published and opinions can be moderated/tracked.

Many people now use the Web to access instant advice on personal issues and both product and services for example, <http://www.holidays-uncovered.com> is a site that is popular with prospective resort visitors, written by recent resort visitors.

Interestingly, Wikipedia has grown in recent years but it is important to consider that moderation, accurate use of references and

Sensitised Marketing – Or can it be intrusive?

With advent of tools like news aggregators it is possible to acquire knowledge on a range of products and services or even 'sense' content that is being displayed. An example, if Google Ads and Facebook advertisement placement. Google Ads detects the content you are reading and then presents you with suggested product. On the other hand Facebook exploits your personal profile and then suggests advertisements that you may be interested in.

All this profiling may in time become too intrusive if subtle strategies are not followed. It is fine for organisations like www.lastminute.com to send out HTML based newsletters by email outlining special offers. However, will consumers be confident about their information not being traded – This is not to imply that such organisations do this as opt out options is



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clear.

The benefit of using Social Networks

Today organisations like <http://www.ning.com> offer customisable social networking sites. These can also be established on a private/ invitation only basis.

From a corporate perspective, if investment in online Social networks and associated social media tools could help reduce organisation duplication, complex reporting structures and miscommunication then the result has to be greater unity and openness of working practices. Maybe they have the potential to expose malpractice or even exploitation.

What is the value of RSS to Businesses?

The following illustration provides an overview of the benefits of this technology, especially from a marketing and emerging digital marketing perspective:

<http://www.kh-2.com/images/rssbenefits.gif>

It was interesting to see a recent article in a national daily that announced a grouping of new political bloggers. Cynics may suggest that this is an attempt to capture a growing movement of new political commentators. In 2002 approximately 100,000 bloggers toiled away at their craft. During the US election campaign (2004) it was reported the blogging (short for web log) phenomena resulted in the development of 8 Million (source: Pew Internet & America) of the 120 million adult American Internet users creating blogs, a 58% increase from the previous year.

During the 2005 UK election campaign it was reported that even Michael Howard's (opposition contender) wife was blogging daily while she was escorted him on his election trail. The growth in blogging statistics is also true for the United Kingdom - with the current number of bloggers reaching 30 Million. The Guardian noted that they had achieved 2 Million page prints in their first 2-3 weeks.

Knowledge Hemispheres (their brand is known as KH-2 or Knowing How2) CEO Dr Savi S Arora also noticed in January 2005, the Financial Times ran a special section on the growth of Blogging and wiki'ing. 'I couldn't go to sleep for consecutive nights as I knew that something new was brewing for the Internet. The scope of what is now known as a Web 2.0 was hidden and difficult to size'. I wanted my company to pioneer in this field, its still early days though'. The result is that KH-2 are one of the few company's that offer corporate podcasting solutions and understand the potential targeted penetration potential of technologies such as Real Simple Syndication (RSS - feeds). KH-2 also have the unique ability to build custom feeds and also aggregate specific content. The technology of Web 2.0 offers the ability to control content deliver for standard newsreader systems.

Is there a place for Corporate Blogging?

With the current growth of those reliant on RSS technology running at 6 Million per week, the question to ask is whether there is sufficient interest with corporations to pursue web-blogs / blogs. One of the constraints is the potential breach of confidentiality. There is some good news, www.backbonemedia.com suggests that there are many positives to be achieved by corporations adopting the 'art of blogging'. Their report was written by Stephen Turcotte. They asked hundreds of companies to participate in an online survey and also conducted in-depth interviews with leading individuals from six corporate blogs - that were selected as representative of the diverse spectrum of the corporate blogging world. What we discovered was that for the majority of our survey sample, corporate blogs are living up to all the hype....We discovered that corporate blogs are giving established corporations and obscure brands the ability to connect with their audiences on a personal level, build trust, collect valuable feedback and foster strengthened relationships while and at the same time benefiting in ways that are tangible to the sales and marketing side of the business.



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Just like in other aspects of life, success breeds success. What we see with successful blogs is a chain reaction that starts with a sincere interest on the part of the bloggers to provide their audience with great value in terms of useful and engaging content in the form of information, help, discussion and ideas. If a company can harness their customers' knowledge and ideas, a company will find better ways to satisfy their customer's needs and wants.

Listening to customers and acting on their suggestions is one of the best ways to build a group of customers who are committed to expressing their goodwill to their community. It is a common practice in blogging to provide a link back to a thought originator, which is valuable because back links are a way that search engines distinguish the order of the editorial rankings. When customers start commenting, posting or tracking back to their blogging community it can have a viral effect - spreading the word through other blogs. We discovered that it is a company's blogging strategy that will produce the strongest community goodwill, and that goodwill brings the most marketing and sales returns.

Can Marketing companies even those already active with the Internet gain any advantages?

Forester Research, in its RSS 101 (One to One) Market report suggest that RSS is a powerful tool, albeit for the technologically advanced today. They also suggest that marketers should test and deploy to proactively maintain relationships with their customers. It currently appears that RSS is morphing into an individually targeted marketing channel capable of offsetting many of the downsides of other channels. This technology allows companies to target, segment and personalise communications, much as the way email does today. Individualised RSS recipients receive text, images and promotional offers uniquely matched to their interests and desires. The individualised feeds enable marketers to communicate with subscribers based on

demographics, past behaviour or any other segmenting attributes. Recently it has been suggested that podcasting could be a useful tool, effectively contributing to an 'attention economy'. Audio on the move that is subscriber based is a powerful 'tuned' medium. With the next-generation solutions each recipient gets his or her own unique feed, enabling marketers to understand how many and which recipients are picking up their messages. In addition, because each feed is unique to the individual recipient, marketers can track and measure subscriber actions all the way down to an individual, facilitating the same behavioural targeting and testing possible in other personalised media. This can also provide the potential to create a unique message for each user based upon demographic or behavioural data. Best of all these feeds, once set-up do not require any changes on the part of the recipient - they can use the same reader they use today to get their blogs or news feeds to access a company's promotional messages.

What next?

Forester's research reveals that 57% of marketers are interested in adding RSS to their marketing mix. A related reason may be the demographics of those who are online today. Marketers are excited by the possibility of a 100% message deliverability to a desktop via an RSS feed rather than email. There are no email maintenance issues with RSS. Maybe the potential of RSS is only restricted by our imagination to apply it to commercial contexts.