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social media
monitoring +
engagement

The FUTURE of Analytics



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The Future of Analytics

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CHAPTER 1

INTRO - WHERE DO ANALYTICS STAND
IN SOCIAL MEDIA?

The metrics world changes faster than the quick change artists on America's Got Talent. Recently, a number of exciting measurement news stories hit the social web.

Twitter acquired BackType, a social media analytics company known to help marketers track their interactions and conversion statistics. While a recent transaction, **Backtype** anticipates that this acquisition could elevate the micromedia mecca. In a **AllThingsD.com** post, Twitter platform head **Ryan Sarver** says, "The BackType team will bring this technology and expertise to Twitter to help Web publishers get the most out of the platform."

Knowing the importance of social media metrics, the Interactive Marketing team at **Forrester held a Tweet Jam** focused on the subject. They discussed existing challenges and opportunities in the arena. Social media measurement pioneer, **Nichole Kelly** from **FullFrontalROI** engaged in the chat and offered her ideas on social media accountability.

There has been no shortage of Google+ metrics as the new social media platform continues to generate buzz across the social web. Within the measurement discussion, the hot topic is the network's fast-paced user growth. Could it eventually reach Twitter and even Facebook's user base (especially once it's no longer in beta)? Other topics of discussion include the male to female ratio, +1 usage and mobile downloads. If you want to keep up, topline stats are available via **Google Analytics and Google Webmaster Tools**.

Metrics: One Size Does Not Fit All

Social media is just one of many avenues to take in your **journey** to reach customers and improve ROI. Whether you select that route or another, such as advertising or public relations, pack a catered measurement approach specific to your selected path. If they work hand in hand, you'll have a suitcase full of strong, relevant results.

Paid, Owned, Earned Media - Often times a marketing strategy will encompass paid, owned and earned media. For instance, it might be an advertising campaign (paid), a microsite (owned) and some buzz from local press (earned). You might measure impressions for your paid search campaign, your conversation rate on your microsite and the amount of news releases from the press. Each medium has its own set of metrics. So where does social media fit in?

Social media starts as owned media. Your Twitter handle or Facebook page is created and controlled by you. However, once you develop some buzz, your community forms and conversations about your brand arise, you've entered the earned media camp. So what was once owned and controlled, can easily become organic. It is a living, breathing, changing experience that cannot be measured by impressions, conversion rates or number of news releases. Social media needs its own set of metrics.

Of course, before you start measuring you need to know where social media fits in your plans. **The New Rules of Marketing** and PR is a great book to pack in to your planning process. It discusses the integrated approach to take when traditional media and public relations give way to the more electronic and information-based methods, a.k.a. social media. Once your marketing and PR strategies are determined, you can dive into your measurement approach.

We came up with some analytics and measurement questions to consider. As you work your way through this ebook, try keeping these questions in mind.

- *What are the most important platforms to be measuring and why?*
- *How do you measure success?*
- *How do you evaluate behavior?*
- *What training is needed to be considered a "social media analyst"?*
- *What do you think measurement's current role is?*
- *What do you foresee as the biggest training issues?*
- *Where could education be improved?*
- *What's the best way to implement metrics?*
- *Can you share what you believe standardization might look like, i.e. KPIs or the method to build these KPIs?*

After reading this ebook, please feel free to visit [this form](#) before August 19th and give us your thoughts on the questions presented above. We'll be sharing this information in a summarized form with the community.

CHAPTER 2 THE STANDARDIZATION

As many industries grow, there is usually a shift in tracking and recording. It is a trial and error process that adjusts as the right methods are found and best practices are made. This developed movement helps to transform the methods into trusted metrics.

In order for the social media industry to evolve (so that we can start to see comparative offerings when it comes to reporting and analysis), we need to work towards standardization. If we have standardization, not only will it enable brands to improve their own reporting, but it makes it possible to begin benchmarking across the social media industry.

What do we mean by Standardization?

When we talk about standardization, we're not saying that everyone needs to roll out the same exact cookie cutter approach to metrics and reports. Rather, as an industry, we need to roll up our sleeves and build a pool of metrics specific to the social media industry. Analysts can cater their approach based on their brands' **defined KPIs** and **objectives**. As noted in Chapter 1, we may need to create new metrics that have been designed and based fully in the social space and not adapted from traditional marketing.

But there's so many options.....

We know. There are so many options out there when it comes to analytics methods, metrics and platforms. The point is not to say one method or platform is better than another, but to make a framework that can be used across multiple platforms and methods. There are tons of ways to get to Grandmother's house and just because we can all take the same path over the bridge doesn't mean we should. We need to embrace our differences, learn from them and move forward to new ones.

Where we can find the Standards

So where do we start? How do we start defining those standard metrics to use across the board? We start right here by sharing with each other. Here are some of the engagement metrics we find provide valuable information.

Share of Conversation

A metric **defined by Radian6's CEO Marcel Lebrun**, this measures your industry's

online conversation and where your brand fits in. It is not so much about whether your competitors are being mentioned, but rather focuses strongly on the magnitude of conversations around your brand.

Adjusted Engagement Level

Tracking how engaged you are with your community is an important metric. It can show how your engagement affects other areas as it fluctuates. While the fast-track approach is to simply look at mentions you have marked as completed, you also need to keep in mind, according to your social strategy or playbook, there may be comments that you feel do not require engagement. These items should not be counted against you, which is why you should adjust your engagement to represent these changes.

In the spirit of Standardization, here are some examples from other organizations that are working toward this goal.

Case Studies: Those Who Teach Metric Standardization

WOMMA - **Word of Mouth Marketing Association** (WOMMA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to credible word of mouth marketing. They share their best practices and knowledge in order to advocate and enhance this space, and metrics is a key tool in their arsenal.

WOMMA has a **measurement and metrics guidebook** that dives into standard social media metrics such as quantifying volume, word of mouth sentiment and the value of a conversation. Part of their book looks at the main differences between social media measurement and other mediums' measurement. A key anomaly for social media metrics is brand advocacy. Brand ambassadors often live on the social web and, according to WOMMA, there are tools and tricks to measure their level of devotion:

- Identify the different ways people advocate for your brand
- Separate ambassadors from positive sentiment
- Explore who's doing the advocating and determine their level of passion

Once the ambassadors are determined, consider these brand advocacy metrics:

- *Net Promoter Score* - This is a loyalty metric. It gauges how brands treat their customers. **Netpromoter.com** has a specific calculation process for determining brands' scores.
- *Brand Advocacy Quotient (BAQ)* - **Nielsen Online** created this metric to determine if that passionate commenter is a true brand ambassador. Are they promoting or corroding your brand?

- *Online Promoter Score* - This measures the effect of marketing on consumer advocacy. It was the **first online word of mouth metric** to show a correlation between online advocacy and sales, as documented by **Forrester** in the book, **Groundswell**.

Make Measurement Make Sense

Marketing is another industry enthralled with the concept of measurement standardization. Metrics are prevalent in marketing as they help us understand campaign results. The three leading advertising trade groups grasp the value of measurement in marketing, however, they found there was no shared vision amongst the entire industry when it came to metrics. With the goal to enhance marketing and media management decisions, these trade experts including the **IAB** (Interactive Advertising Bureau), the **ANA** (Association of National Advertisers) and the **4A's** (American Association of Advertising Agencies), came together to develop standardized digital metrics and cross-platform measurement solutions. They called it "**Making Measurement Make Sense**." Their objectives:

- Define standard metrics and make them transparent and constant
- Drive consensus across the industry
- Establish a measurement governance model

With this initiative, the marketing industry will have a unified approach for measuring results.

[**Social Marketing Analytics**](#) - John Lovett of Web Analytics Demystified and the Alimeter Group

Teaming up in this overview guide, John Lovett and Jeremiah Owyang tackle how to standardize the social media industry with step by step suggestions as well as an overall framework to work within.

[**#MeasurePR**](#) - This twitter chat is the perfect example of a collaborative space where industry experts and practitioners are coming together to share their knowledge and experience. It helps to build an open space where measurement strategies are front and center.

CHAPTER 3 THE TRAINING

Once the metrics are ready, a major roadblock is obtaining qualified people to implement them. Cue the Social Media Analyst. But what makes a person qualified to be a Social Media Analyst? Someone in this position typically has a marketing background with significant web or IT experience. Not only must they have the ability to cull through, understand and analyze the data, but they also need to communicate results to the rest of your organization.

Reporting is a crucial part of a social media campaign and the Social Media Analyst will eat, sleep and breath it. In addition to monitoring the metrics discussed in this eBook, they must ensure reports are aligned with the company's strategy.

Often times there are questions regarding where the Social Media Analyst belongs. Are they marketing? Customer Service? PR? The answer is: All of the above. Social Media is customer service, HR, marketing, employee relations and more. The actual departmental placement of a Social Media Analyst varies between companies but overall, they need to have a strong understanding from multiple areas within the organization.

How do you become a Social Media Analyst? Just like with any job, a solid understanding of your industry is essential. It's all about a knowledge-based foundation. Knowledge comes in the form of schooling, experience and a strong skill set. Read on to see if you have what it takes!

The Foundation

Education

If you attend most higher education institutions right now, you'll be hard pressed to find a Social Media Analyst degree. Before you can start obtaining an education in social media analysis, close those textbooks. You need to get some experience in the real-world social media space so that you know the context of the types of data you'll be taking a look at. Since it may be some time before we see this type of learning fully integrated into every day learning, we can focus on the areas that already exist like PR, Marketing, Communication degrees. These degrees lend well to the type of work a Social Media Analyst may complete on a day to day basis since many of the underlying areas are similar like market research, informing the public and communicating information.

Job Experience

Education can only go so far and that's where previous job experience can step in and help round out a person's abilities. What do social media analysts do before analyzing social media? Analyze everything else of course! People who have worked in marketing analyst roles, logistic managers and even project managers (where jobs have a very planning-focused sense) will excel in social media analytics since the role requires planning of KPI's and how you will analyze the data.

Here's a real-world example of a qualified person in social media measurement.

Chuck Hemann is VP of Digital Analytics at **Edelman Digital**. But that wasn't always the case. With a Bachelor's in Political Science and a Master's in Applied Politics, he joined a communications firm in Ohio and conducted research and served as co-chair of the digital department. As his work in the digital space evolved, he worked his way up through experience until his latest gig at Edelman came his way. During a recent **interview**, Chuck shared the three core elements that make up his latest role. "First is obviously helping our clients understand how their digital programs are performing (measurement). Second is helping to build and grow an analytics capability here in Chicago. Finally, to continue doing thought leadership that helps raise Edelman Digital's exposure in the area of digital analytics, measurement, listening and collective intelligence."

Skill Set

Beyond the education and job experience, often times certain skill sets make a person better at a particular job. These are some skills that makes an employee's work go from inferior to superior:

- Logical thinking and problem solving skills
- Ability to multi-task
- Graphical or design thinking tendency
- Strong writing abilities
- Step by step reasoning
- Organized behavior

The Walls

There is specific 'on the job training' that will need to be completed once a new employee for the social media analyst role is hired. What should your training course look like when you bring on a new staff member? There's been some great content written on this topic, such as Jeremiah Owyang and Altimeter Group's **Career Path of the Corporate Social Strategist**. Here's an example breakdown of a proposed training schedule for someone with a marketing analyst background with casual social media experience.

Week 1: Social Media 101

- Expose your analyst to the social media culture
- Guide them through some of the industry leader's opinions
- Have them define what social media is and where their role fits within it

Week 2: Your Organization's Social Media Plan

- Introduce your organization's vision of social media to your analyst
- Work to build a comprehensive understanding of what your goals and objectives are

Week 3-4: Hands On

- Whatever software you use, get your analyst some hands on training
- Don't rush them – allow them to get comfortable with the platforms you use, it will pay off in the long run

Week 5: Build the KPIs

- Using objectives you may have already defined for your organization, let your analyst build out how these would look
- Be sure to record and document your methods

Week 6: Build the Report

- Using the work from the previous week, build out a comprehensive report that shows the information you've defined
- Keep in mind that report you create does not need to be set in stone. Shift with the changes in your results as need be

CHAPTER 4 INSIGHTS FOR THE FUTURE

It is all very well and good to talk about all the things that need to happen in order to make analytics a constant and viable option in the social media industry, but of course it's easier said than done. In order to make this a reality, we need to keep a few things in mind over the next few years.

Share the Knowledge

We're not talking about exposing internally sensitive or trademarked information here, but rather methods and metrics that have been found to work well in the social space. If we are sharing this information we can start to learn from each other in a collaborative environment. Collaboration could be done through conferences, white papers or councils. Some great stuff is already happening like the #measurePR twitter chats.

Try, Try Again

There will be metrics and methods used that will seem very promising but at the end of the day they just won't work in the social space. Instead of getting frustrated with these, we need be able to take an objective view to discuss what works, what doesn't work and where to go from there. If you want to see this in action, just take a look at the search engine results for "What is Social Media ROI?". Just a few examples of articles discussing this topic are: **Social Media ROI for Idiots**, **2011 Trending Topic: Social Media ROI**, **How to Measure Social Media ROI**.

Leaders need to Lead

The great work from strong leaders (some of which we've discussed in Chapter 2) needs to continue and amplify. Those strong voices will help everyone find their way through the trees so we can all see the forest. Trying to keep up and follow? Add some of these voices to your reading list: **KD Paine**, **Oliver Blanchard**, **Chuck Hemann**, **Jeremiah Owyang**, **John Lovett**, **Jason Falls**, **Shonali Burke** and the list goes on and on!

Believe in the Integrity of the Data

Data doesn't lie, but it can be misinterpreted. Make sure that no matter what you're doing, you are letting the data speak for itself. Draw insights from your data but don't force the data to say anything that isn't there. Sometimes as much as we want 1+1 to equal 3, it just isn't meant to be. Tom Webster gave us a **great post** on this very matter.

CHAPTER 5 WRAP-UP

Measurement is constantly changing as existing platforms evolve and new ones enter the social space. But one thing continues to remain the same - keeping an eye on data will help us understand results. As we analyze results, we can create meaningful ROI.

As an industry, we can work together to get ahead in this area. Let's collaborate to build a strong foundation, develop standardization and work toward creating and executing meaningful measurement strategies.

Start the process today. To do so:

- Stay afloat on the latest social media news and trends. Another Google+ could pop up tomorrow.
- Keep in mind that social media metrics differ from other mediums. Treat your social campaigns as their own living, breathing thing that need a catered apparatus.
- Utilize the standard social media metrics but at the same time, defy them. Always look at new and different ways to measure results in order to find what works best for you while staying ahead of the game.
- Get educated. Get your team educated. Get everyone educated. Consider hiring experienced personnel to help with the process.
- Share, collaborate, listen and respond. Engage with the industry in order to better the environment as a whole. Your insights could inspire others. Plus, there is much to learn out there if you take a look. And you could make some new friends in the process.

Take a look back at the questions in Chapter 1. What are your answers? Are there more questions to consider? Whether you're currently in the space or just about to dive in, continue to ask yourself these questions. We appreciate your feedback and would love to hear your thoughts and read your comments on this topic.

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