

The New Intersection of Search and Social Media - Ten Ways to Think About These Two Powerful Forces

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A paradigm shift is defined in Dictionary.com as a fundamental change in approach or assumptions. Radical shifts in the way people think about things present new and exciting opportunities for business. The paradigm of search is changing. We are searching for people on LinkedIn. We are searching for how to do things on YouTube. We search for what's happening this second on Twitter. Here are ten new ways to understand the new intersection of Search and Social Media and the key business opportunities arising from this exciting new paradigm.

1. Google Has An Algorithm for Serving Real Time Tweets

Similar to the way websites are ranked in Google, there is an algorithm for serving tweets in Google's real time search. Amit Singhal of Google, Inc. stated that Google looks at what is being retweeted, how many people follow a Twitter user, and whether a tweet is organic or from a bot when selecting what is displayed in real time search. This is very valuable information to utilize in order to take advantage of the opportunities associated with real time search. By following people in your industry on Twitter, many of them are likely to follow you back. The more followers you have, the more likely your tweets will show up in Google. By posting valuable information in your tweets, your followers will be more likely to re-tweet. Again, the more re-tweets you get, the more likely Google will display your tweets. Finally, be sure to tweet in person. Don't use an automated 'bot'.

2. Opportunities Are Arising From Instant Search

Search.twitter.com gives us the opportunity to find information in real time. We no longer have to wait for search engine spiders to crawl webpages in order to find the information in search. We are able to see what people are thinking right now about various topics. We can also watch for people looking for our products and services. For example, searching "search marketing company" in Twitter search, we are able to identify people looking for our services right now.

3. The Power of Subscriptions

Having a strong presence in as many social media platforms as possible will increase the reach of your offers exponentially. The more friends you have on Facebook, links on LinkedIn, and subscribers on YouTube, the wider the audience when you push out an occasional offer. Stay active in each community and provide valuable information and resources to build trust and relationships over time.

4. Create A "Fan" Page In Facebook

If your business does not yet have a 'Fan' page in Facebook, you are missing out on an opportunity to build a community among 500 million users. Facebook pages have become extremely powerful marketing tools for several reasons. First and foremost, Facebook pages index in Google and the other search engines. This gives you the opportunity to own more real estate in the search engines. Additionally, you can build your email list by collecting the email addresses of visitors to your page by offering your visitors a Unique Value Proposition (UVP) such as an eBook or downloadable free guide in exchange for their email address. This gives you the ability to remarket to your ever growing email list.

5. Crowd Sourcing Is A Valuable Way To Find Information

Social media gives us the ability to bypass searching through websites to find information. Rather, we can simply ask those in our online communities and get trusted information instantaneously. For example, I was traveling to Dallas a few weeks back and asked my Twitter followers for a recommendation on a good place to get a steak. Within about five minutes, I had enough recommendations to keep me well fed all week.

6. YouTube Is The #2 Search Engine In The World!

YouTube.com is currently the #2 most used search engine, second only to Google and ahead of Yahoo advertising. According to an April 2010 social media study by Michael Stelzner (<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/social-media-marketing-industry-report-2010/>), only 46% of businesses utilize YouTube or other online video to promote their products/services. This means that if you post videos to YouTube, you are reaching a large audience that the majority of your competitors are not even trying to target.

YouTube videos can also be optimized to show up in other search engines, such as Google. By including keyword phrases in titles, descriptions, and tags of videos, building subscribers to your YouTube channel, and building links to your videos, you can increase the likelihood of your videos showing up in Google and YouTube search.

7. Social Media Profiles Can Be Optimized For Search

Setting up various social media profiles is only the first step. In order to be picked up in search, you need to optimize them. To do this, take full advantage of all the space on which they will allow you to add content. Do not leave anything blank. Each bit of information a social media site allows you to post is an opportunity to work in a keyword phrase you would like to rank for. It is also helpful to build links to your social media profiles/pages from other websites.

8. Social Media Can Help You Own More Real Estate In Search Engine Result Pages

Your website alone will only be displayed a maximum of two times for a given search. Your Facebook Page can give you that third listing. Your Twitter page can give you a fourth. Your YouTube video can give you a universal search listing with an image thumbnail that really catches the eye in a search results page. The more active and effective you are in social media, the more space you can own on a search engine results page.

9. Social Media Can Be A Great Way To Build Links

Social media profiles/pages give us a great opportunity for linkbait. People love to link to things about themselves. By posting items such as a list of the top ten experts in your field, the people on that list will be very likely to link to your post. In addition, you can use your social media profiles to post links to your website.

10. Harness The Power Of Community

Create Facebook groups, Facebook 'Fan' pages, LinkedIn groups and Ning sites to build social importance and create your own community. By gaining a strong presence in social media websites, you can recruit followers for your own social media community. Websites, such as Ning.com, allow you to

create your own community website and manage it. We developed a Ning community at www.internetmarketingclub.org and we have built trusted relationships from all over the world.

Searching the web by way of search engines is by no means fading into a thing of the past, but we are seeing an interesting shift in search behavior. Search and social media become powerful forces that can complement each other and present interesting business opportunities.