

Evaluating Social Media and Inbound Marketing Success  
for Content Delivery Companies

Talia Davis

University of Denver University College

Capstone Project

for

Master of Professional Studies

In Organizational and Professional Communication

August 13, 2010

---

Lora Louise Broady  
Capstone Advisor

---

Amy Kelsall, Ph.D.  
Academic Director

Upon the Recommendation of the Department

---

James R. Davis, Ph.D.  
Dean

**Abstract**

Social media and inbound marketing have been on the receiving end of much hype in the past five years. Due to the rapid growth of Internet usage, companies find themselves needing to stay current and develop new marketing tactics. This is especially true for companies whose product is the content they deliver electronically through their Web site. The initial depiction of online social media marketing as an easy and cheap/free solution has proven to be inaccurate. Many companies find themselves lacking for a way to measure successes with these new tactics that provides an accurate picture of the success or failure of their online initiatives. This study surveyed consumer behavior and evaluated extensive historical analytics with the object of finding a uniform way to measure success. However, the outcome proves that as of yet there are no definitive measurement tactics but there are clear best practices to capitalize on success.

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
Literature Review.....	3
Design and Implementation.....	15
Online Consumer Survey.....	17
• Survey Goals	
• Survey Design and Response Collection	
• Survey Results	
• Interpretation of Survey Results	
Web site Historical Usage Analysis.....	31
• Analysis Goals	
• Analysis Origin	
• Analysis Results	
• Interpretation of Analysis Results	
Summary of Results.....	37
Discussion.....	38
Areas of Further Research.....	43
References.....	45
Appendix A.....	49

## **Introduction**

The recent advent of social media has caused many self-styled gurus to emerge, however, there is little research or understanding of why or how social media performs the way it does. It is difficult to recreate results within social media to the satisfaction of top-level executives and often leaves companies in a confused state regarding which tool to use, how to define the target, and how to generate buzz (the nectar of the social media phenomenon).

With the dearth of understanding around measurement, developing best practices based on actual implementation and usage, together with an outline of how to structure social media tracking, would be valuable to organizations looking to initiate social media plans or groups who have been using social media without being able to track or show success. While measurement practices are beginning to emerge within the sales and retail worlds, organizations that rely solely on content delivery have very few practical resources or existing research on which to build successful social media plans.

### ***Goals and Objectives***

Social media is growing at an exponential rate, but the question of how a content delivery company can generate increased brand awareness and traffic using social media remains undefined. This capstone investigates the conundrum of how companies do, can, and should quantify and replicate

the results of social media marketing so successes can be celebrated and recreated while failures avoided. Additionally, this capstone investigates user behavior and online traffic patterns to better understand what motivates consumers when they devour online content. To meet these goals, an extensive literature review was conducted, and two distinct types of primary research were pursued. First, a consumer survey was designed to better grasp users' online decision-making as it relates to pure content. Secondly, an in-depth analysis of real life traffic trends for two distinct Web sites was conducted. Armed with fourteen months of data along with tracking statistics of various tactical campaigns, this capstone provides a detailed analysis of success and failure in social media programs. Based on this research, recommendations are delivered on the execution of social media that can, in turn, be implemented through the lifetime of a company as it navigates through the fluid and changing nature of social media and inbound marketing.

### ***Benefits***

The goal of this project is to develop a set of guidelines for content delivery companies to navigate the seas of social media and inbound marketing. By monitoring how social media reacts and performs over a prescribed period of time in a controlled situation, this body of research can assist new companies in planning social media as part of their overall inbound marketing. Additionally, there are numerous tactics for measuring

social media, but in this researcher's experience, no gold standard exists. If a clear and accurate measurement standard for social media can be created, content delivery organizations will be better able to understand the enormous capacity for success, together with the challenges that exist in the social media realm. Lastly, if best practices for implementing and assessing social media tactics can be identified and brought to light, this will enable companies to maximize the utilization of social media and inbound links to increase traffic and brand recognition.

### **Literature Review**

This literature review examines four elements of evaluating social media and inbound marketing success:

- The Growing Use of Social Media Marketing
- The Importance of Good Measurement and Tracking Techniques
- The Challenge of Building Online Communities
- The Downside of Social Media Marketing

#### ***The Growing Use of Social Media Marketing***

The idea of social media and the implementation of its tactics have grown exponentially within the last ten years. Consumer's perspectives on information delivery, and specifically what they have come to expect from a company, have changed drastically. Rather than waiting for details about a product or service to cross their paths, consumers are actively seeking information through the Internet (Scott 2009). With the advent of new

technology--the Internet, digital music players, video downloads, and streaming television--consumers have gotten more impatient than ever for their news and information (Vollmer and Precourt 2008).

Pew Research tells us that the Millennial Generation is a generation of news grazers. They look for their news online and trend towards news aggregating sites like Yahoo and CNN (Rosenstiel et al. 2010). While in the beginning of the 2000's, blogging was growing exponentially in popularity; Facebook overshadowed its popularity beginning in 2006. This indicates that rather than creating their own long-form commentary and writing extended articles, users are micro-blogging (using short-format Twitter messages and Facebook status updates) and citing widely-used sources rather than reporting on the news themselves. These other sources tend to be news aggregators (i.e. Google and CNN) but also include popular blogs (i.e. Huffington Post, Dooze) as well as broader niche sites (i.e. religion resources, politically-focused sources).

The attraction of new media is the interaction on both ends. Users enjoy interacting with companies and companies can learn and adjust content or tactics through interactions with their consumers (Scott 2009). It is no longer the case where a marketer can say, "Let me tell you what my product can do for you." Rather, users want input in decision-making and to be a part of the conversation around a topic (Rubinson 2010).

Additionally, Internet sites like Facebook and Twitter allow consumers to communicate with other like-minded consumers about new ideas, products, and services available instantly. However, the newly shortened “twenty-four second news cycle” is not all positive (McDougall 2010). Consumers have the ability to post their positive, but more often negative, experiences digitally and are doing so at an alarming rate (Scott 2009). With mobile applications, such as Yelp, negative experiences can be posted, transmitted, and change consumer’s minds globally within twenty-four hours (Petrecca 2008). Not only is this relevant for negative experiences or poor products, but also occurs with incorrect information or negative brand connotations, poor formatting, or content that can be interpreted as offensive. Marketers must stay aware of the content that they are promoting and the brand they are managing. It is all too easy for the “bad stuff” to go viral, leaving the positive content concealed (Jenkins, Li, and Krauskopf 2010).

While consumers mainly control the viral ability of Web content, the benefits of new media is not one-sided. Simultaneously, companies are utilizing the Internet and the resources available to them to deliver content while obtaining key information about the consumers using their content (Vollmer and Precourt 2008). Social networking sites such as Facebook offer insights into the users who participate with a company online. This helps companies gain a greater understanding into who is utilizing their content



and into which specific customer segments they fall (Strauss, El-Ansary, and Frost 2006).

With the tremendous growth of social networking coupled with the increased cost of traditional printed media, the rules around content delivery have changed drastically (Cohen and Rutsky 2005).

### ***The Importance of Good Measurement and Tracking Techniques***

With the increased focus on online and social media, the logical conclusion would be that the early adopters discovered some magical way to track engagement online consumers. Marketers are well known for their ability to monetize Web site traffic and other variables. Not so with social media. Mashable.com, a leading online social media guide, states that 84 percent of social media programs within companies do not measure return on investment (Warren 2009). With the mounting focus on return on investment (ROI) within the marketing and public relations sphere, it is interesting that this area is often misunderstood or measured ineffectively within companies.

The debate rages on over how to track ROI within social media. A recent search on Google brought up over 317,000 articles on the topic of measuring ROI success for social media. This amounts to a huge amount of discussion with very few definitive facts pointing to successful techniques. There are many roadblocks to success in measurement for social media because it is a different and diverse beast. When a business advertises in the

newspaper and in the Yellow Pages, there can be a clear line between cause and effect in driving customers. The challenge with social media is its intricacies and complexities that aren't always well understood. With the advent of the Web and social media, a business name can pop up anywhere on the Web and customers can come from Yelp, ApartmentRatings.com or other Web sites that are not business-controlled. No longer is there a direct link between phonebook and purchase; the consumer may have seen the company name on hundreds of Web sites. The proliferation of these sites is one of the primary challenges associated with controlling a company's external messaging. When it comes to optimizing where a company appears online, marketers can find it challenging to ensure that the company controls the message in all cases as well as to correctly identify each of the originating sources of the unique visitors. As noted in the applied research (below), Patheos receives 51 percent of the total visits from search, but over 240,000 search terms are have been used to accomplish that.

Additionally, while a Web site analytics report can track 500 hits from Facebook, it cannot describe its affect on brand recognition or revenue, especially for content delivery companies that rely on advertising impressions to make a buck. A company has to set goals, establish key performance indicators (KPIs), and understand their objective, which isn't always as easy as it sounds (Gattiker 2009). Gattiker notes that there are several places where companies fail at this. A major and common issue is

that while many companies try to be strategic about social media, that doesn't always happen or causes the social media to be ineffective. Gattiker also mentions that many organizations will pound out strategies without much thought or time spent in considering the overall business objectives or the tactical repercussions. This results in unachievable goals or goals that do not really represent the overarching ambition of the company. When it comes to measurement, companies often jump in without taking a strategic look at the current situation to help develop a baseline from which to show growth. The last "harsh reality" that Gattiker points out is using the wrong benchmark. He says, "Some experts suggest that we link SM (social media) expenditures to how they affect sales, or improve average sale value and reduce service center costs. This is then supposed to help us measure ROI. Unfortunately, it fails. For instance, how can one show that social media has increased sales? Dell tried to do so with its Twitter tweets about special offers. But neither they nor anybody else can show beyond a reasonable doubt that such efforts actually increased sales, rather than simply cannibalizing other channels" (Gattiker 2009). What Gattiker is pointing out, and what is clearly missing from this picture, is a guide for companies to measure social media success. A social media measurement guide can be useful not only to companies with a dedicated PR/social media department, but also to companies that do not employ staff dedicated to social media success. A guide can also be used as a measuring stick with which to

evaluate the efficacy of so-called social media experts/consultants.

Measuring success is important to any company to determine the ROI (Return on Investment) of using social media tactics, which primarily consist of hiring a full-time social media expert or a consultant. A company must determine whether or not it is financially worthwhile for their organization to spend money on staffing or outside groups to promote their content or product on social media. Furthermore, every role within a company should have some sort of review and measurement process attached to it. Not only for the company to feel confident in the investment but also for the employee or consultant to understand the effectiveness of their work.

### ***The Challenge of Building Online Communities***

One of the key pillars of social media marketing is building communities. When done successfully, a marketer will find a ready-made community of like-minded people who are receptive to the product that is being sold. A clear example of this is Facebook. Users tend to self-group by interest, rally around products, ideas, or media, and seek out similar enthusiasts and groups that appeal to them. Facebook's Open Graph metadata mine is the most extensive in the world, providing marketers with purchasing habits and consumer activity for over 100 million users (Bump 2010). This information is connected by (in Facebook terminology) a "social graph" which tracks users likes and dislikes (Parr 2010). All of this grew out of a simple idea of connecting college students at their various universities.

While it may seem clear that building an online community is desirable, it is not without its challenges. One of the many hurdles for building online communities is the over-saturation of similarly themed communities online. Users prefer a streamlined approach and while it may have been popular to have several login user names and passwords in years past, users find themselves with upwards of 10+ sites that require a unique login (Strout 2010). With the advent of Facebook Connect in the past 3 years, Web sites can utilize their consumer's Facebook profiles to log into non-Facebook Web sites. Patheos.com utilizes this for article commenting as well as to create an online profile on Patheos and Facebook even gains the user access to a blogging utility on the site. This lowers the barrier to use and enables a casual user who may not choose to have a personal account on a niche online community site (Parr 2009).

A significant hurdle for all online communities is the fear of identity theft or loss of privacy (Granger 2010). This has held the older generations captive and limited their use of social media and involvement in online communities. One clear example of this is in the online faith communities built by Patheos.com. In anecdotal and in-person research done with church groups in Texas, Patheos found that the older members of bible study groups were hesitant to sign up for user names at Patheos despite the fact that they would have increased resources for their group. Additionally, when the Facebook Connect login was made available to them, only four out of a

group of twenty members of the bible study group confirmed that they were also members of Facebook. The group expressed additional concern that the Patheos group might be too “Facebook-like” and therefore put their privacy at risk. Continued improvements have been made within the Patheos community to ensure the safety of all the users of this faith and spirituality site.

### ***The Downside of Social Media Marketing***

The world of social media marketing is oft painted as an easy and inexpensive way to market; however, social media is not without its challenges.

*Loss of Control.* Loss of control is one of the biggest hurdles for companies entering the social media realm. Prior to the advent of social media, media relied on marketers and public relations professions for press releases and information regarding the product. With a company Web site, Facebook page, Twitter account, etc, details on the company are easily found. Additionally, blogs and online review sites (i.e. Yelp) have given the general public the opportunity to be their own critic. In years past, when a consumer disagreed with a policy or disliked a product, they had limited means to complain: a letter to the editor of their local paper, a call or letter to the company, and a few remarks to friends. Today, a consumer can email the company daily, write negative reviews online in thousands of different places, and shoot a message out to national news Web sites with little to no

effort at all (Moss 2010). Additionally, by opening up company blogs and Web sites to comments, an organization risks spam messages that can be inappropriate for their audience. Fortunately, there are programs, such as Pluck, that can help manage the commenting features and organizations can mitigate any concerns, given the staff and attention dedicated to do so (Connor 2010). However, the best way to handle this is dedicating a full-time staff member to monitoring the community and interacting with users (Klein 2010).

*Consistency is Key.* One side effect of social media and the rapid information cycle is that organizations may get overwhelmed with different platforms and begin to neglect one or the other (Hall and Rosenberg 2009). When an organization makes the decision to get involved in social media, they must commit to it for the long haul. If a company joins Facebook and gains a significant following, then one-day stops posting, the followers of that information will just as easily forget about them. Social media requires daily interaction and companies need to truly interact. Unlike the yellow pages where your clients won't miss you if you don't buy an advertisement, if a company disappears from social media once it has started, it looks suspicious and out of date (Weinberg 2009).

Furthermore, if a company doesn't consistently listen to and respond to consumer interaction, they risk creating a negative impression. One clear example of this is United Airlines. While they are active on social media sites

like Facebook and Twitter, United neglected to respond to a very compelling complaint entitled, "United Breaks Guitars," which proceeded to go viral (Molenda 2010). Without consistently listening to the consumers or responding to them on the platform, United appeared uncaring and incapable of handling social media.

*Someone is ALWAYS Listening.* It can be easy to forget that someone in the world reads everything you put out on the Internet. Tweets can seem insignificant because of their short length, however, just as professionals won't send out a press release without proofreading it for content, spelling, and grammar, all social media communications must be well constructed. Nothing is ever truly deleted from the Internet and poor choices can and often will come back to haunt companies. It is just as important for companies to listen prior to engaging. Organizations must know what is going on in the social media landscape before diving in (Liew 2010).

*Trying to Measure Success with Traditional Metrics.* Basic measurement of core metrics like fans and followers does not always translate to social media because of the dynamic shifts in focus (Molenda 2010). With the evolution of marketing and PR, there has to be an evolution of how to measure success. Although executives want instant success and tangible results, a demonstrated increase in fans or followers does not always translate into brand recognition and revenue. Therefore measurement should develop with the technology. In their book, *Avoiding*



*Social Mediocrity*, Stacey Cohen and Marina Molenda outline some categories for evolved metrics for social media, as depicted in Figure 1 (Cohen and Molenda 2010):

Categories of Evolved Metrics			
Sentiment	Engagement	Effectiveness	Brand Affinity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buzz</li> <li>• Health of brand</li> <li>• Monitoring/listening</li> <li>• Comment analysis (establish ratio to measure baseline and gauge success)</li> <li>• Red flags/strong signals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downloads</li> <li>• Embedding</li> <li>• Installing</li> <li>• Pass-alongs (refer, forward, or invite a friend)</li> <li>• Quality of interactions</li> <li>• Registered users</li> <li>• Social bookmarking</li> <li>• Subscriptions</li> <li>• Time spent with content</li> <li>• Uploads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversion rates</li> <li>• Frequency of interaction</li> <li>• Influence</li> <li>• Meeting business objectives and marketing goals</li> <li>• What's working, what's not</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fans</li> <li>• Followers</li> <li>• Friends</li> <li>• Likes</li> <li>• Ratings</li> <li>• Reviews</li> <li>• Share of voice</li> <li>• User-generated content</li> </ul>
			<p>From: <i>Avoiding Social Mediocrity</i>            © 2010 Stacy Cohen and Marina Molenda  <a href="http://www.marinamolenda.com">www.marinamolenda.com</a></p>

Fig. 1. Categories of evolved metrics.

*Deeming Social Media as a Side Project.* For the longest time, social media was treated like a fun extra-curricular activity. Many companies were not involved in social media until a younger employee, who happened to be active on the sites, suggested that the organization approach this new form of marketing. It remained a sideline activity until companies found major successes, and that, coupled with the rapid decline of traditional media, pushed most groups online. Oftentimes companies, whose competitors were already enjoying success online, feared being viewed as stogy or old-fashioned and thus dove headfirst into social media without strategic planning or forethought. The organizations felt they had discovered a magic pill. Free platforms meant less of the budget being allocated to marketing, which seemed like a real recession saver. But companies found that cutting

the marketing budget did not mean they would automatically find success in social media (Directmag 2009). Just like any other marketing tactic, social media requires planning, a strategic approach, and qualified staff – none of which can be achieved without at least a modicum of resources (Weinberg 2010). “If you are marketing from a fairly static annual budget, you’re viewing marketing as an expense. Good marketers realize that it is an investment” (Godin 2005).

### **Design and Implementation**

As outlined in the literature review, social media marketing, online community interaction, and measuring online success for businesses can pose challenges for even the most established companies. One reason for this is the newness of the medium, with tactics untested in the long-term and new products appearing frequently. The research that this capstone covers is broad and dynamic, with a two-pronged approach. While on the surface the diversity of this research may appear unrelated, it is not. Understanding both sides of the coin, the consumer and the company, enables educated decision-making.

The first step in this research is to understand consumer behavior and how the users intersect with content delivery companies online. This was executed through an online survey to frequent Internet users to understand how they interact with content online. Understanding how content decisions are made and what motivates a consumer to pursue a specific avenue of

information. With the proliferation of niche sites, news sites, and an easy-to-develop blog or website, the choices can be overwhelming. In this first section of research for this capstone, the researcher's aim was to understand how faith decisions were made online and evaluate if demographic or psychographic factors influenced these decisions. Additionally, the survey questions were designed to shed light on whether social media marketing or any company-influenced online marketing sways these decisions.

The second half of this research consisted of extensive analysis of fourteen months of historical usage data collected from two very different Web sites. The impetus behind this research was to evaluate different social media tactics in a semi-controlled environment to determine if there are specific metrics that can be relied upon to measure and replicate success in social media. For purposes of this capstone, success is defined as increased traffic and increased brand awareness for the company. By evaluating the historical analytics for the Patheos.com Web site along with the extensive tracking of various social media tactics, the researcher hypothesized that either a pattern will emerge for successful tracking or it will become apparent that there are no uniform metrics at this point in the lifetime of social media, although there could still be best practices to implement. Lastly, the analytics for the blog *Talia, She Wrote* offer a control group for the social media tactics. There are many variables in the Patheos data including celebrities pushing out information or popular articles. With one

tactic, and little promotion, *Talia, She Wrote* offers a baseline from which to measure Patheos successes and failures which in turn will assist in evaluating appropriate metrics and best practices.

### ***Online Consumer Survey***

#### ***Survey Goals***

The goal of the primary research was to determine how Internet users interact online and specifically with content delivery Web sites.

Understanding users' online behavior is key to identifying metrics that adequately measure successes in driving traffic and brand recognition.

#### ***Survey Design and Response Collection***

Primary research was conducted to identify real-life trends in social media usage and growth. Based on the author's global digital reach, this primary research was extended to determine how social media users around the world employ social media for their informational needs. In order to ensure that the results reflected as true a sample of social media users, the survey was distributed online, through social media vehicles including Facebook, Twitter, and various blogs. It was then passed on further, through networks and "word of type" (aka online word of mouth). The goal was to obtain a total of fifty responses from two distinct respondent groups, including: those who had extremely high usage patterns in multiple social media platforms (aka "power player"), and those who represented the casual social media user (or, "average user").

The survey questions are presented in Appendix A. In order to develop and focus the survey questions, three primary focal areas were established.

1. What are the users' online habits and Internet usage realities?

Five questions were used to address this focal area:

- a. Question 1: Do you use the Internet regularly?
- b. Question 2: How long have you been active on social media sites?
- c. Question 3: What types of social networking do you use?
- d. Question 4: What sites do you visit daily?
- e. Question 5: How much time do you spend on the Internet each week?

2. How are online faith choices made? How do users utilize the Internet for non-tangible content and information? This focal area was addressed through the following three questions:

- a. Question 6: Do you consider yourself spiritual, faithful, or religious?
- b. Question 7: Do you consider yourself a preacher, seeker, or teacher/student?
- c. Question 8: When you have faith questions (whether your own or about your neighbor's faith or belief), where do you go to seek information?

3. To understand the actual people that were answering the survey, basic demographics about location, age, sex, and profession were needed. To satisfy this need, the following questions were asked:
  - a. Question 9: Are you male or female?
  - b. Question 10: What is your age range?
  - c. Question 11: What race do you identify with?
  - d. Question 12: Where do you live? (Internationally)
  - e. Question 13: If you live in the United States, what state do you live in?
  - f. Question 14: What is your yearly income?
  - g. Question 15: Are you a social media professional or work with social media as part of your profession?
  - h. Question 16: What industry do you work in?

The survey was conducted online via [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com).

Surveymonkey.com was selected as the online survey vendor because it provides a cost-effective, easy and comprehensive way to create and send surveys as well as simple ways to gather and analyze data.

A link was generated from surveymonkey.com and distributed via the author's digital reach. It was posted to Facebook three times, and posted to Twitter three times. It was reposted on Twitter, (or re-tweeted) eight times by social media professionals. It was also reposted on personal Facebook

walls numerous times, encouraging the broadest reach for the survey. The author personally has a digital reach of 1,300 Facebook connections and 1,200 Twitter followers. Digital reach is, essentially, an online Rolodex that extends to all activities on the Internet. This will include Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and other online avenues of communication. Based on HubSpot.com's "Web Reach Grader," the author scores a 97 percent for Facebook and 97 percent for Twitter, putting her in the top 3 percent of Twitter users and top 2 percent for actual Facebook users. The author's digital reach combined with the exciting survey topic encouraged respondents to participate. In addition, respondents were given the option of requesting a copy of the survey results and there was a \$25 incentive drawing for the charity of the winner's choice.

### ***Survey Results***

*Number of Respondents.* A total of 122 people responded with 119 people completing the full survey conducted on [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com). Of the 122 respondents, 79 percent use the Internet regularly to find news and information on current events, 82 percent visit social networking sites daily (with 1 respondent, or less than one percent, saying they do not), and 48 percent said that social media is fine for connecting with friends but they don't seek reliable information there.

*Length of use.* As reflected on Figure 2, 20 percent of respondents said they had been active on social media for greater than eight years, 31

percent said they were between one and three years, 4 percent reported less than one year, and 2 percent said they really aren't sure about this social media thing. The largest percentage came in at the four-to-seven year time frame, with 43 percent. This reflects the heyday of MySpace and transition to Facebook, as a frame of reference.

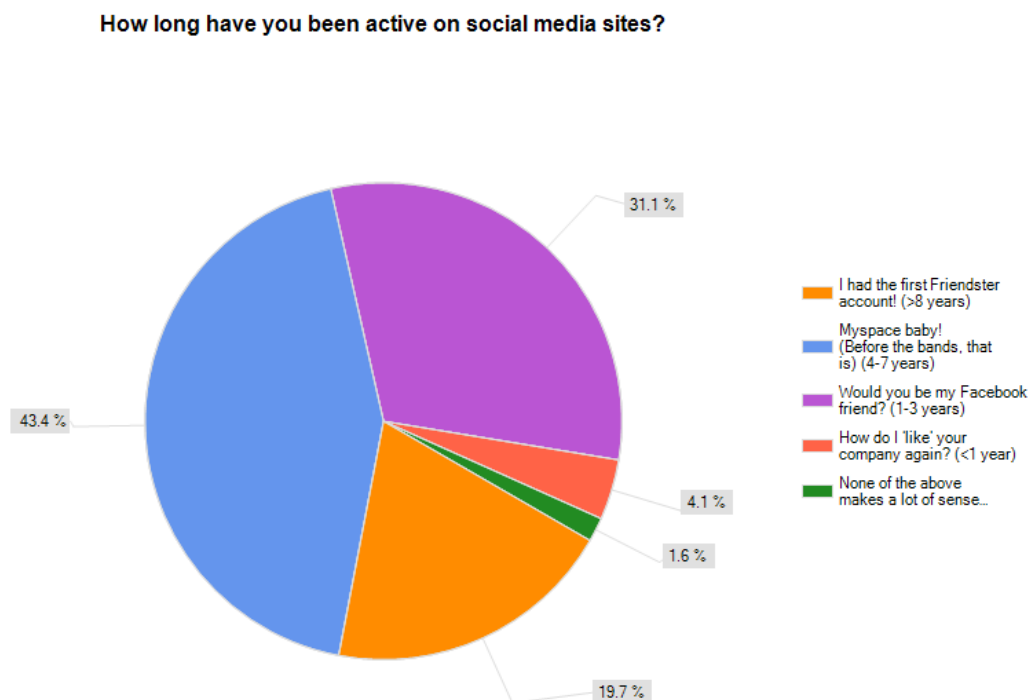


Fig. 2. Length of time active on social media sites.

*Frequented sites.* As seen in Figure 3, when asked what social media sites they frequented, an enormous 98 percent said Facebook. Twitter, coming in second, had 47 percent, followed closely by LinkedIn with 46 percent. From there, MySpace only claimed 20 percent and Ning, 4 percent. 11 percent of the respondents suggested other sites that they visited. These include Google Buzz, Flickr, FourSquare, LiveJournal, YouTube, Digg,



Tumblr, Connexion, CafeMom, and Yammer. Interesting to note that almost all of the additions are niche sites, catering to a specific demographic or new and not yet mainstream.

*Daily visits.* When asked what general (not specific social media) Web sites they visit daily, the respondents replied overwhelmingly Facebook (94 percent), Google (81 percent), news sites like CNN or Fox (48 percent), and blogs (44 percent). After the clear break fell Twitter (31 percent), Yahoo (21 percent), other assorted sites (20 percent), LinkedIn (5 percent), and MySpace (less than 1 percent). Ning rated a 0 percent as no respondents visited Ning regularly. Other sites reported were Gmail, ESPN, LiveJournal, Hulu, Drudgereport, banking sites, AOL, Chabad.org (religious site), shopping sites, Mashable, Flickr, Ravelry, NYTimes (and other newspaper sites).

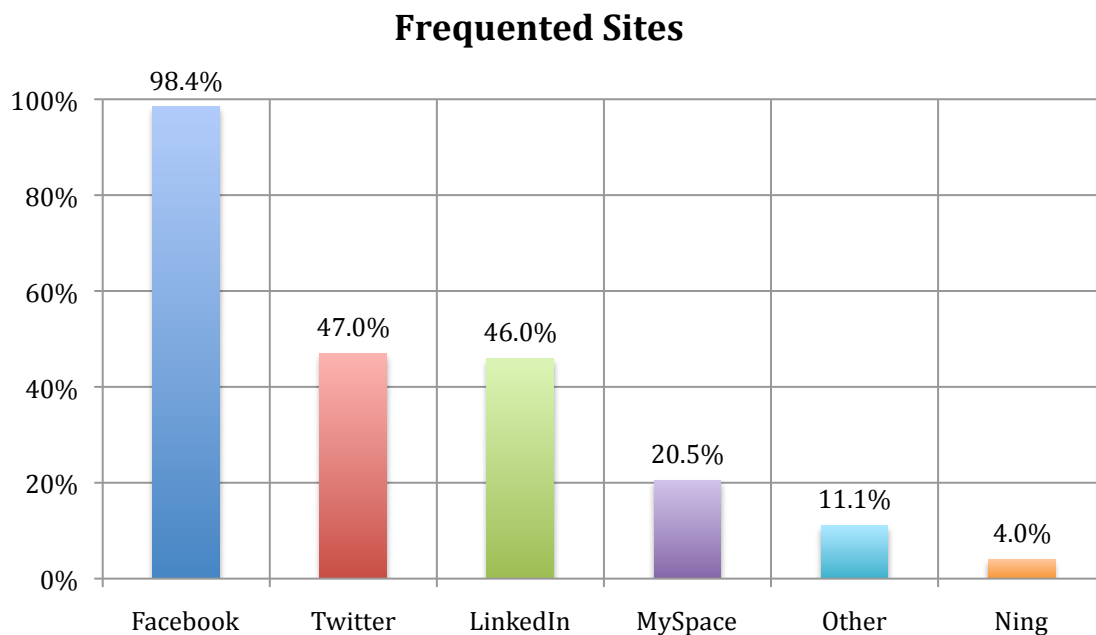


Fig. 3. Frequented sites.

*Time spent.* Lastly, in this focal area, respondents were asked how many hours a week they spend on the Internet. As depicted in Figure 4, the largest segment was the 30-39 hours per week (23 percent). This was shortly followed by 20-29 hours per week (22 percent), 10-19 hours (21 percent), 50 or more hours (15 percent), 1-9 hours (12 percent), and 40-49 hours (7 percent).

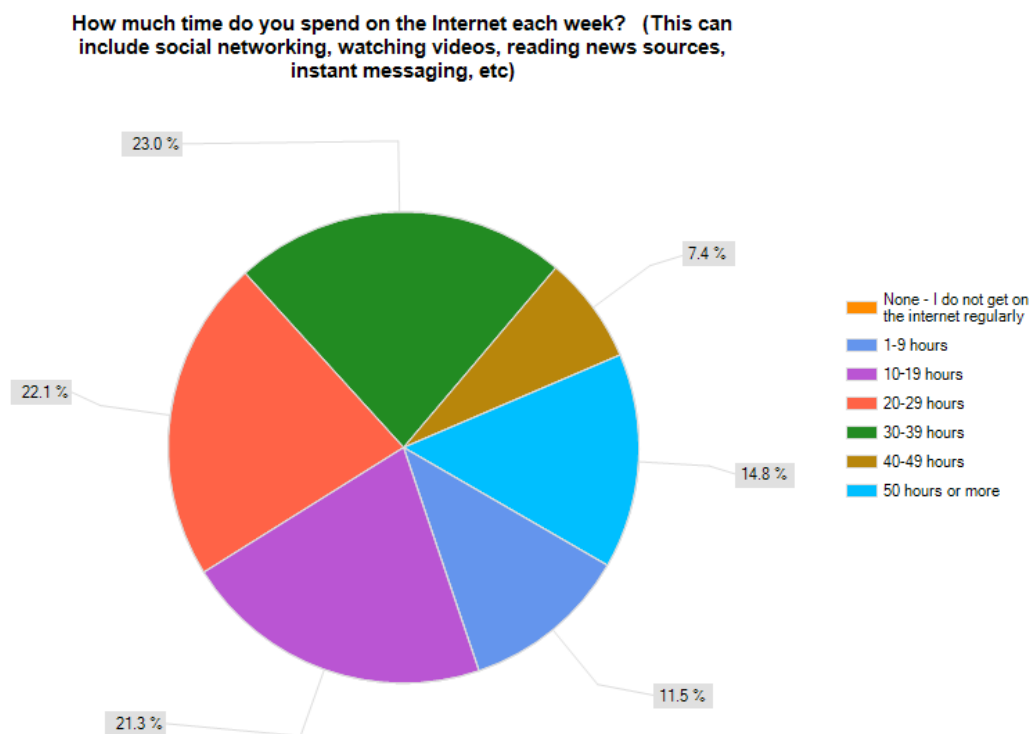


Fig. 4. Time spent on the Internet each week.

*Faith choices.* This next focal area was included to help understand how users make online content choices by zeroing in on faith choices. To start, respondents were asked a basic question, do they consider themselves any form of spiritual, faithful, or religious – 72 percent of respondents answered yes, while 28 percent answered no. Moving forward, the question

was asked if they considered themselves a preacher, seeker, or teacher. This question was to help characterize how they saw their own role within an online faith community. These roles were defined as - **Preacher**- a leader in the faith community, be they ordained or not. **Seeker**- a person seeking out faith, either their own or a new belief system and **Teacher/Student**- a person who seeks academic resources, looking for reliable, peer reviewed content. As can be seen in Figure 5, the seeker persona came in at 41 percent, teacher/student at 38 percent, not interested at 17 percent, other at 13 percent, and preacher at 8 percent. Some responses to other were – Atheist, a collector (remain open but don't seek), non-religious, a student AND seeker, explorer, retired from active spirituality, a bit of each, and contemplative.

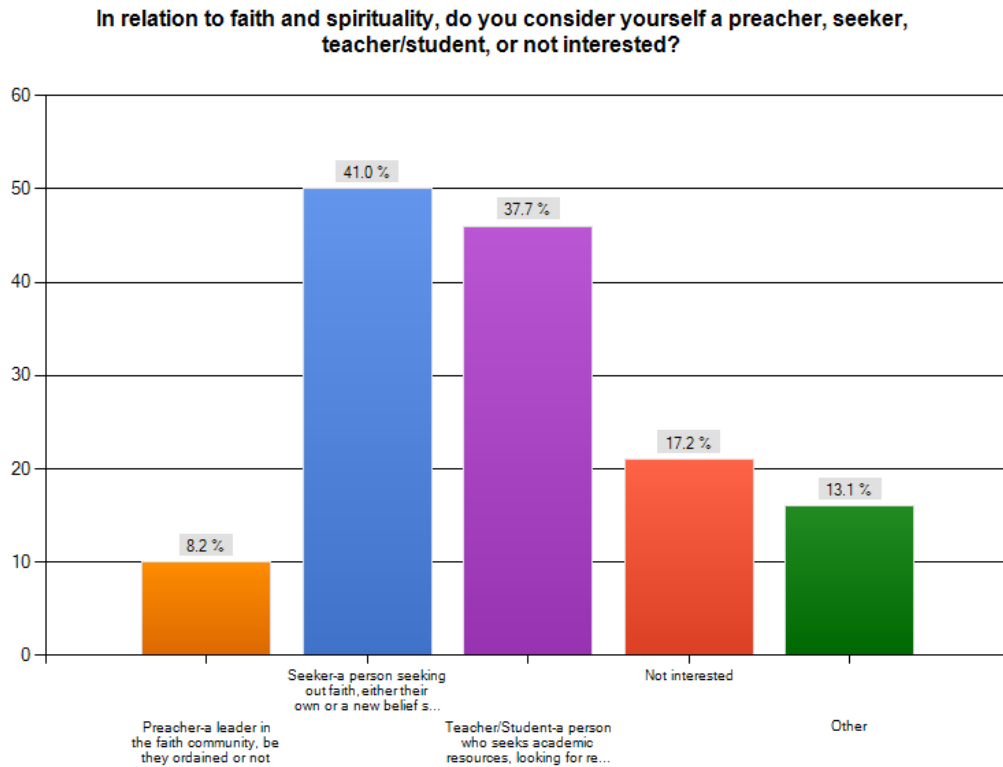


Fig. 5. Preacher, Seeker, Teacher, or Other.

The crux of this section, which was in place to understand how online faith choices were made, revolved around this next question. When asked where they go when they have questions about faith (not just their own but perhaps their neighbors, too), the respondents reported:

- Church/ Synagogue/ Mosque: 25 percent
- Preacher/ Rabbi/ Imam: 32 percent
- Friend who seems to know a lot about religion: 53 percent
- Family: 35 percent
- Internet- Google search: 57 percent
- Internet- I have specific Web Sites I trust and always go back to: 26 percent

- I don't ask- too afraid: 1 percent
- I don't ask- not sure where to find quality information: 2 percent
- I don't- I don't have questions, I don't identify with religion or spirituality: 9 percent
- Other (please comment below): 15 percent

Overwhelmingly, the respondents who replied with other noted that the survey left out good, old-fashioned books and the library. Other responses were journals, Patheos.com, a closer look inside myself, meditation, the deities themselves, and a person of that religion.

*Demographics.* The last focal area describes basic demographic information. Interestingly, one respondent skipped all of the demographic information, with no explanation. The respondents reported themselves to be: Male (33 percent) & female (67 percent). Ages: 18-25 (22 percent), 26-35 (60 percent), 36-45 (7 percent), 46-55 (7 percent), 56-65 (3 percent). Overwhelmingly, the respondents were Caucasian (92 percent) with 1 percent being Native American, and 7 percent claiming other. Again, the "other" respondents questioned the survey creator for leaving off Asian, Latino, Middle Eastern, American, and (interestingly) Jew. 98 percent of the respondents live in the United States, 1 percent in Europe, and 2 percent in Israel. Of the United States respondents, they represented 21 states. The majority of respondents live in Colorado, Florida, Texas, and New York, as depicted in Figure 6.

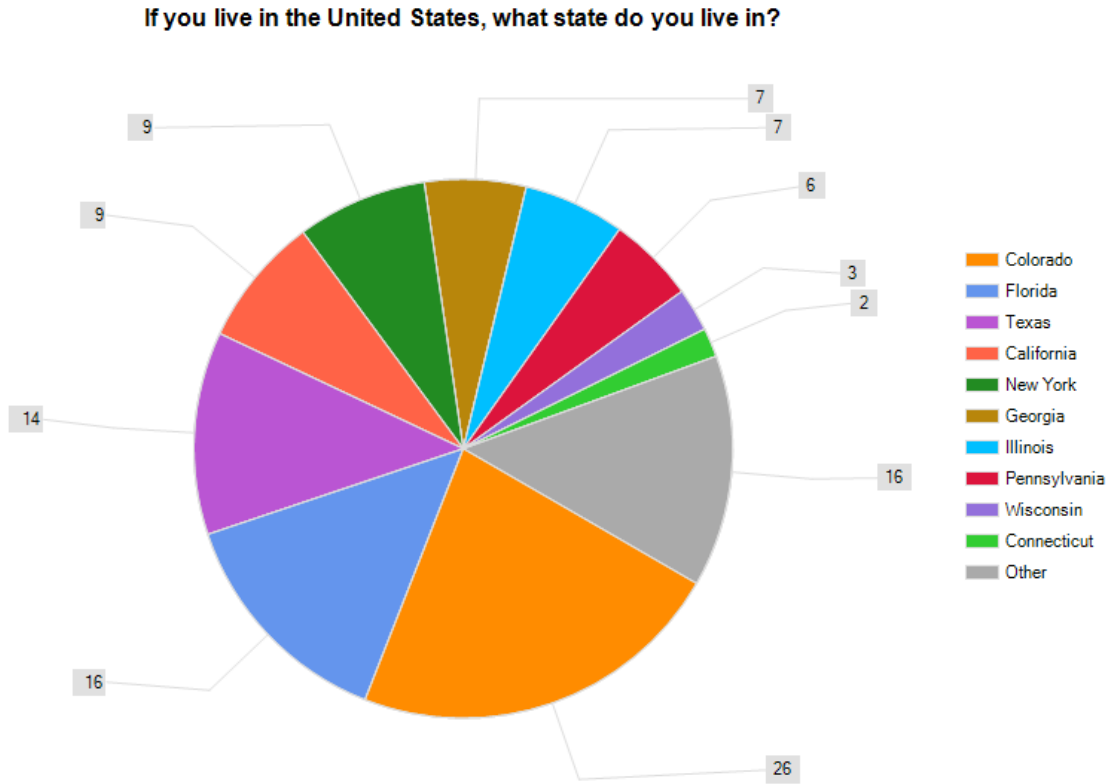


Fig. 6. Location in the United States.

Yearly income was asked to verify that a broad variety of socioeconomic levels were represented (see Figure 7).

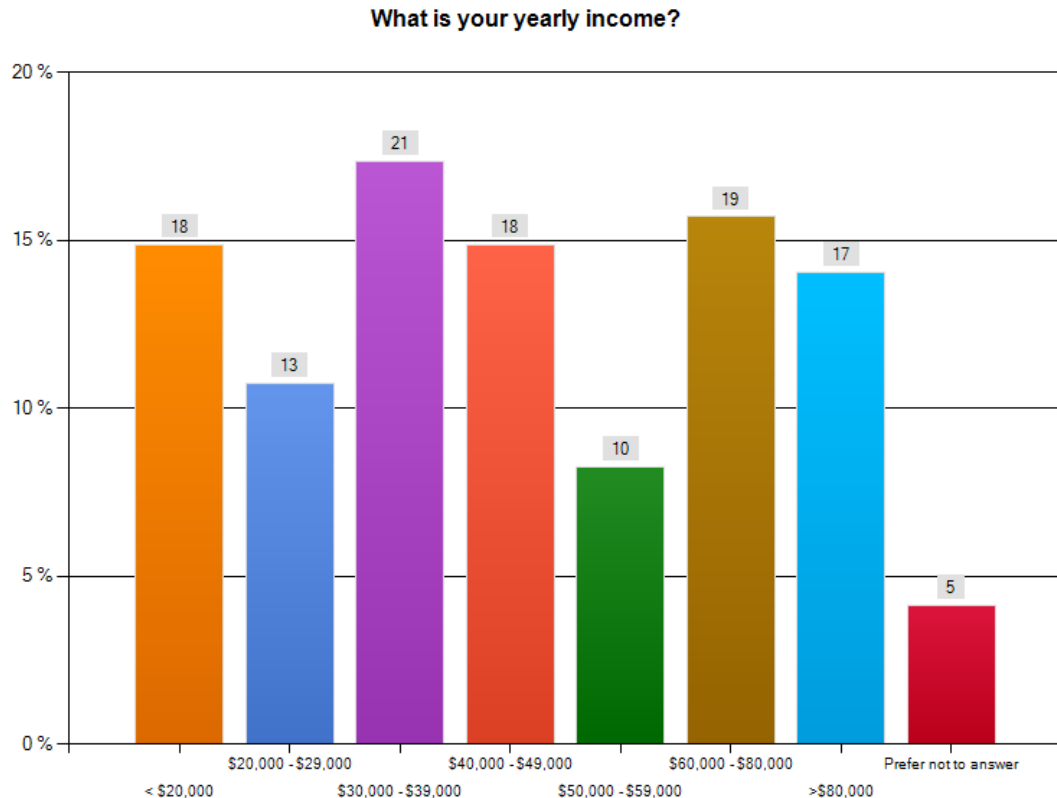


Fig. 7. Yearly income of respondents.

Lastly, the respondents were asked if they work in the social media field or if they utilize social media in conjunction with their daily job. While 31 percent responded yes, 69 percent responded no. The final question asked of the respondents was about the field they do work in, again to get a cross-section of responses. Only 12 percent of the respondents work in online fields, either content delivery or ecommerce. 17 percent work in education, 12 percent in non-profit, 4 percent in religious fields, and 3 percent in brick and mortar stores (either retail or food service). 51 percent responded with other and gave these fields – student, medicine, art,

military, healthcare, IT & software, PR, mommy, financial, government, design, advertising, entertainment, retired, and sales.

### ***Interpretation of Survey Results***

*Research Challenges.* There were no significant challenges to the collection of the primary data.

*Conclusions.* By design, this survey was proposed to a specific demographic, one that is active online and falls into a younger age range. The results demonstrate that it was successful in this demographic with the “typical” respondent being Caucasian, young, and (interestingly) female earning in the \$40,000-\$50,000 range. However, there was some variety in online behavior as well as some outliers from this image of the typical survey respondent. Within this respondent profile, the survey leads to the conclusion that when active online, regardless of some socioeconomic level, sex, age, or location, there are specific social media sites that are frequented regularly.

In regard to content and with a special focus on religious content, it appears that users are uncomfortable discussing personal beliefs with just anyone. They tend towards a trusted friend who has shown clear knowledge of the subject or the Web. But that is where they diverge. While in person, the respondents turn to a trusted and known acquaintance, when it comes to the Internet, they tend to go to an anonymous Google search, preferring the solitude and anonymity of looking at articles on the Web from their personal



computer. This can present a challenge for these seekers. Since it is nearly cost-free to create a professional looking Web site in 2010, how can a seeker be sure they are getting correct or corroborated information? With Web sites like Wikipedia who encourage the lay public to edit and adjust articles as they see fit, often leaving articles vandalized, information consumers may not be getting reliable facts. Just like the snake oil salesman of old, consumers can be taken in by big claims and flashy Web sites. It stands to reason that consumers' habits of asking a trusted friend can and should be carried over onto the Internet; therefore seekers will seek information online with the recommendation of friends, families, pastors, and communal leaders.

While Web-savvy users are turning more and more to the Internet for answers, companies are interested to discover where they are looking. 94 percent of the respondents visit Facebook everyday; therefore Facebook and popular social media sites seem to be prime real estate for interaction with consumers and advertising. Additionally, 81 percent are on Google daily; therefore, high search-ranking results are vital. Search engine rankings are the result of quality content, search engine optimization, and quality Web sites creating inbound links.

These results would seem to indicate that there is no one magic bullet with which to reach all consumers. Just as traditional advertising was strategically conceived, planned and executed, so too must social media and

inbound marketing be strategic. If one considers all these ideas and creates a successful plan, half the battle is won. The challenge now is to define how to measure these consumers and understand their value.

## **Web site Historical Usage Analysis**

### ***Analysis Goals***

The goal of this analysis was to determine how content delivery companies measure success in social media and inbound marketing. By evaluating actual traffic patterns overlaid with tactic experimentation, measurement goals can be determined and perhaps used by multiple organizations to ascertain success in social media.

### ***Analysis Origin***

The analysis is largely derived from a year's worth of data on Patheos social media usage trends from Google Analytics, Facebook Insights, Twitter Tracker and various other sources. In addition, as a control group to establish a baseline and to view success or failure on a smaller scale, the social media trends from the blog *Talia, She Wrote* were collected and evaluated on the same factors as Patheos. Using the data that has been collected from Patheos over the past year, social media-related metrics have been identified and tracked for the duration of the data collection period with an eye towards the different implementation tactics with which Patheos experimented. Social media metrics may vary based on the contributing factors such as: social media specific campaigns, inbound marketing tactics,

and content available. An example of this variable might be a spike in hits from Twitter because of a celebrity tweeter picking up a Patheos link.

### ***Analysis Results***

*Time Frame.* Metrics were pulled for Patheos' usage for the time period of May 5, 2009 (the official launch date of the Patheos Web site) through July 10, 2010 – a period of fourteen months.

*Volume of Visitors.* During the chosen time frame, Patheos received 861,027 visits with 2,915,699 page views. Of those visits, 15 percent (132,561) came from direct traffic, 31 percent (282,275) came from referring sites, 51 percent (445,808) came from search engines, and less than one percent (383) were derived from "other." Of the 282,275 visitors that came from referring sites, 52,433 or 19 percent came from Facebook (see Figure 8). StumbleUpon procured 28,159 or 10 percent of the visitors (see Figure 9). Twitter accounted for 9,663 or 3 percent (see Figure 10) and Wikipedia managed 7,773 or 3 percent of the visitors (see Figure 11).

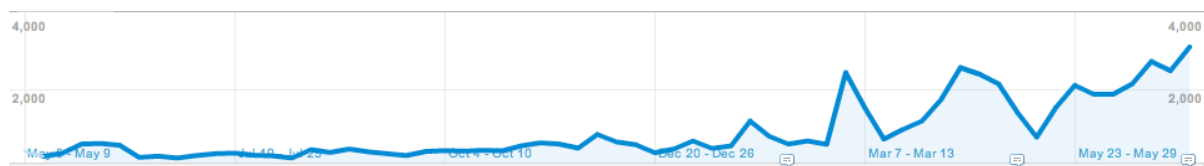


Fig. 8. Patheos Facebook results by week from 5.5.09 to 7.10.10.

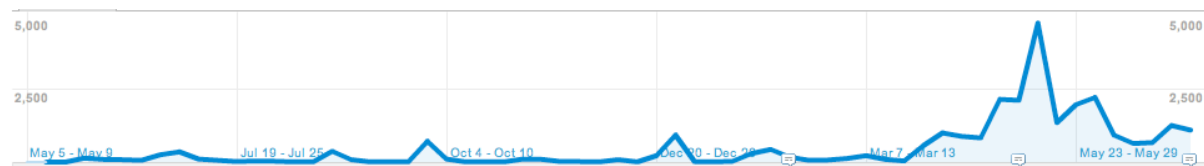


Fig. 9. Patheos StumbleUpon results by week from 5.5.09 to 7.10.10.

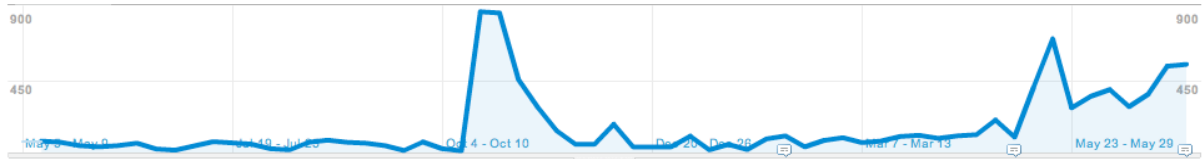


Fig. 10. Patheos Twitter results by week from 5.5.09 through 7.10.10.

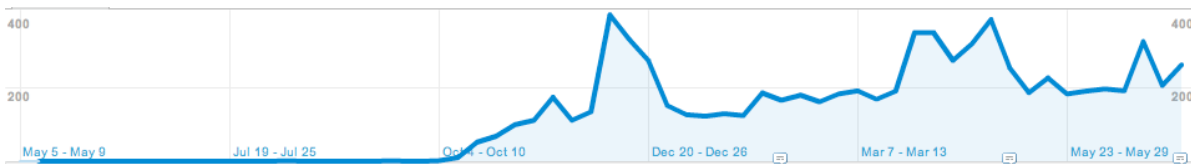


Fig. 11. Patheos Wikipedia results by week from 5.5.09 to 7.10.10.

*Talia, She Wrote*. In contrast, *Talia, She Wrote* is a small blog that gets minimal exposure through social media. Over the same time frame, *Talia, She Wrote* received 2,306 visits with 3,757 page views. Of those visits, 17 percent (403) were direct traffic, 71 percent (1,655) were referring sites, 10 percent (243) came from search engines, and less than one percent (5) came from other sources. Of the 1,655 visitors that came from referring sites, 23 percent or 373 came from Facebook (see Figure 12), 26 percent or 424 came from Twitter (see Figure 13), and approx 36 percent or 600 came from links on other blogs.

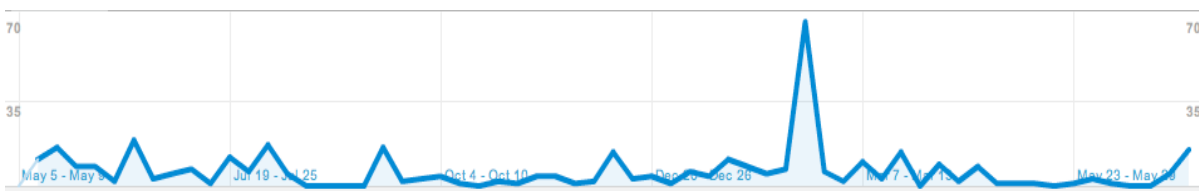


Fig. 12. *Talia, She Wrote* Facebook results by week from 5.5.09 to 7.10.10.

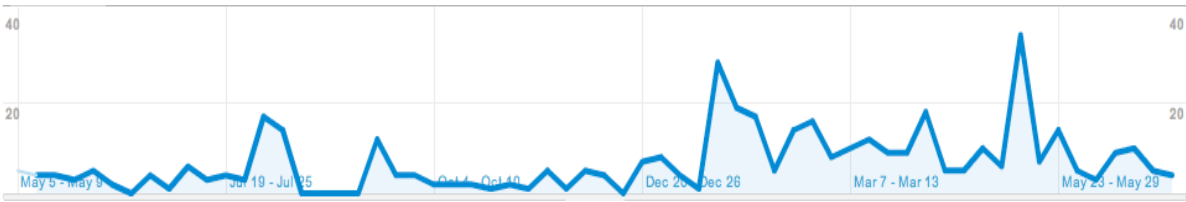


Fig. 13. *Talia, She Wrote* Twitter results by week from 5.5.09 to 7.10.10.

### ***Interpretation of Analysis Results***

*Trends.* The clear, initial trend is that the regular and consistent use of social media builds equity with the people who are listening. This is evident in the research when comparing the statistics between Patheos and *Talia, She Wrote*. When looking at Patheos, which demonstrated consistent interaction, the data shows consistent traffic from the social media source as well as increases when new tactics were implemented. With *Talia, She Wrote*, there was no consistent social media usage and the numbers dropped to zero every time a campaign ended. For example, when *Talia, She Wrote* was not promoted consistently, the numbers fell off and then jumped when the posts were promoted on Twitter or Facebook. The jumps are much less apparent in the Patheos' graphs, with the baseline increasing, instead of falling to zero each time. Though the results tend to fluctuate wildly, a trend to increased interaction and increasing baselines becomes apparent.

*Shifting Tactics.* It is interesting to note where the graphs truly begin their steady upwards climb. This involves a look back at Patheos' tactic tracking and benchmarks. Patheos began experimenting with varied social

media tactics in October 2009. Prior to this, Patheos was posting to Facebook and Twitter only, attempting to hit once an hour for the eight-hour workday on Mountain Standard Time. Rarely did Patheos hit the goal of 8 Facebook posts and Tweets per day. Starting in October, Patheos began asking guests, athletes, contributors, or subjects of interviews to promote the articles pertaining to them or the subject they were passionate about. This accounts for the large October spike as Olympic gymnasts Dominique Moceanu and Samantha Peszek were the subject of faith in sports articles. Subsequently, they promoted the article on their Twitter pages, causing a huge jump. Though the numbers fell back to earth after that promotion, a steady increase is seen beginning in January. Strategic thinking behind the tactic caused this increase of the baseline.

At this juncture, Patheos staff began adjusting the tactics to see what had an impact. From January 27 – February 24, one message was sent out per hour to both Facebook and Twitter. The messages were logged on an excel spreadsheet and the staff was held accountable. This tactic showed little additional engagement and did not increase traffic as you can see in Figures 8 and 10.

From March 1 – 22, a new tactic was implemented. This had Patheos promoting content in batches: two to three messages per batch, three batches per day at 8:30, 11:30, and 3:30. These times were selected to maximize the audience on the east and west coasts. On the weekend,

Patheos used HootSuite to automatically publish 12 messages on Saturday and 12 messages on Sunday. There were to be recapped posts from the week and set to be delivered one per hour between 6am and 6pm.

Additionally, there was to be one "Off the Beaten Path(eos)" message that was delivered in the 11:30 batch each weekday highlighting a some non-article aspect of the Patheos Web site. Overall, this new tactic caused Patheos to receive many complaints of over saturation. While the number of messages delivered stayed relatively the same, the appearance of being bombarded by posts turned many average Facebook users off. There were many fans that unsubscribed and disengaged from the page completely. Additionally and anecdotally, investors and staff received personal emails from friends and acquaintances that were upset and dissatisfied with the change.

The last tactic that was initiated and has been in use, successfully, since the end of March was a blend of the other two tactics laid out above. There would be two messages that would go out, 15 minutes apart, four times a day on weekdays while six recap messages would go out on the weekends, one every two hours. These times were picked strategically to ensure that users were targeted at the peak hours of site usage and in all time zones. The weekday times selected were – 8:45 & 9am, 11:45 & 12pm, 1:30 & 1:45pm, and 3:30 & 3:45pm. On the weekend, messages were posted through the utility HootSuite at 8am, 10am, 12pm, 2pm, 4pm, and

6pm. This tactic ensured that no matter when a user came online, there was likely some content available to them that was fresh. Additionally, this tactic maintained the "Off the Beaten Path(eos)" concept to help promote site-wide content that may often be overlooked. As evidenced in the graphs above, the baseline for Patheos begins to significantly grown and climb.

*Available in All Venues.* The Patheos site was re-launched on May 5 of 2010. At that time, several social media enhancements were made across the board. These additions helped the site increase general traffic and engagement. This included adding social media buttons to all blog posts and articles as well as Portal pages. As these tools were increasingly utilized, the traffic from the social media sites grew steadily as did the "Fans" on the Facebook Fan Page and the "Followers" on the Twitter page. At this juncture, it is impossible to isolate the cause and effect. Did the increase in traffic cause an increase in brand awareness and therefore they became fans? Or, did they become a fan because they saw Patheos elsewhere on Facebook (i.e. when their Facebook friend left a comment on Patheos via Facebook Connect) and then they visited the Web site? The increase in fans and increase traffic from these sites happened simultaneously.

### ***Summary of Results***

In the consumer survey, the theme that became obvious was when a user is dealing with a sensitive topic, they won't just turn to anyone on Facebook or any Web site they come across. Many users will ask a trusted



friend or colleague however; most users have come to consider Google as a trusted friend. Therefore, consumers turn to Google for sensitive information, especially since they can browse in the privacy of their own homes. In the Web site historical data analysis, it became apparent that companies cannot tie success to the number of fans or followers they have. The analysis showed that being available to all users in all forms (i.e. having the flexibility of logging in through Facebook Connect) increases the engagement of the users and encourages them to self-promote the site as a trusted resource when a friend is in need. In this way, the content-delivery organization becomes the source consumers are seeking- available in the form and place they want it, especially when it is recommended online from a friend.

### **Discussion**

*Revision of Concept.* What became clear in both areas of research, as the consumer survey results and the Web site historical usage data was evaluated, is that social media is truly a mystery. This is not because there is some magical, yet not understood quality about it. The reason social media presents the issues it does, is because it is user-controlled. Social media is as fickle and hard to understand as each human being. Since social media results are unpredictable, measurement must be tailored per the organization. There appears to be no baseline for every single organization

that employs social media, rather KPIs and other measurements are personal and individual.

Social media professionals are constantly trying to ensure that the right content is in front of the right person at all times. With Facebook's Open Graph project, the details of how people surf and dig on the Internet is just beginning to be understood. As for today, there doesn't appear to be a magic metric that can prove to all social media professionals and their bosses that social media is effective in driving traffic or increasing brand recognition. Perhaps instead of finding the magic metric, an evaluation of each tactic is needed and a personal mix of tools with personalize KPIs is key.

*Conclusions.* When viewed together, the results of the consumer survey and the company Web site historical usage analysis displays the diversity of measurement opportunities and broad social media options. Additionally, the results demonstrate that within measurement, each company must define their own KPIs and standards. What is effective for a faith-based company may not be effective for a news organization. Nonetheless, each area of social media and the inbound marketing has distinct challenges for content delivery companies:

*Facebook:* Facebook can be driven by both promotion and user participation, making it a unique platform. The interaction of the Facebook buttons on articles or areas of the Web site can certainly be tied to an

increase in brand awareness but cannot be tied to a direct increase in traffic. An increase in fans and an increase in referred traffic happen simultaneously and it can be hard to extricate the two from each other. Clearly a company cannot look at a day-to-day report of Facebook messages and traffic then say, "be sure to do X so we can ensure Y number of hits." However, companies can evaluate Facebook by looking at all the pieces available and implementing what is right for the organization. This could be Facebook Connect, a Facebook Fan Page, an ad campaign on Facebook, etc. As a site grows, this will be part of a broader promotion and engagement plan but it cannot be relied upon to drive all traffic. Over all, there isn't a magical way to utilize Facebook but there are a lot of varied options. Companies have to play with their tools and track the tactics they use from the start to see how THEIR audience wants to hear THEIR content. This includes immediately developing the KPI as the tactic is born. No tactic should be implemented without a determination on how to track success. KPI decisions can be made too late.

*Twitter:* Twitter is capricious and hard to control. It lowers the attention span and the news cycle to barely a second. Additionally, with all the noise out there, it is hard to make yourself heard, especially quickly. Building a following and a network takes a lot of time, however, it is key to finding success. Companies must have a presence but where they can really benefit on Twitter is by finding someone who has a true following already

built and is trusted to convey the message for the company. That is how groups can reach outside the built-in network. The message as well as the messenger have to be the right fit. This could develop in a number of ways. It could be a group of individuals who are selected per topic for a limited time. Or, it could be inviting a Tweeter who has a large following to be engaged on the site and to tweet the relevant content. In the case of Patheos, a highly respected writer with a large (over 44,000) following on Twitter was engaged to write for Patheos and promote Patheos Inspiration Portal content on Twitter. This Tweeter caused the baselines to grow and spike which has thus been named The Ralph Effect (named after the highly respected writer himself). While Ralph impacted traffic to Patheos from Twitter, it must be said that the Tweet button prominently displayed on most pages of the Web site drove more sharing of content that, in turn, drove more traffic. Over all, tweeting with minimal followers, while it creates equity, does not cause a large impact in traffic or brand awareness and could cause management to question the ROI of the initiative.

*Wikipedia:* While Wikipedia does offer a consistent level of traffic, its value is actually the inbound link. Inbound links impress the search engines and help drive organic traffic. While Wikipedia can drive traffic, it has more value in that the search engine sees the inbound link and thus gives more weight to the home Web site.

*StumbleUpon*: Amazingly, StumbleUpon can be a phenomenal referring site. The only downside, and it is substantial, is that there is absolutely no way to know when or if the hits will happen. StumbleUpon cannot be controlled, but if an organization continues to add links to the StumbleUpon site the more likely it is that something will hit. And when it hits, the traffic numbers are enormous. Patheos received a huge bump in StumbleUpon hits towards the end of the evaluated time frame for the sole reason that the Pagan Portal Manager diligently puts her links on StumbleUpon, thus giving Patheos a bigger target on the site.

Overall, it has become clear that success in social media is not a numbers game, but rather success is reliant upon a blend of tactics utilized strategically and implemented well. A measurement dashboard is recommended to track each tactic and results to enable practitioners to look back and move forward to success.

One notable point that came out of evaluating Patheos vs. *Talia, She Wrote* was the increased usage of social media buttons when they had visual counters. This drove interaction and appear to be much more effective in increasing traffic. By allowing practitioners time to understand the audience they are addressing and the strategic implementation of proven tactics with a personal measurement attached, companies can find success online with social media and inbound marketing.

### **Areas for Further Research**

While this Capstone has addressed many ideas, its scope was limited to active Internet users and additionally limited in its surveying capacity. Further research should include reaching out to a broader cross-section of the world's population to see how poor, wealthy, older, younger, etc people interact with content on the Web. In addition, the development of a dashboard for use by organizations would almost certainly be a worthy and welcome venture. This dashboard would provide some guidance to companies with limited experience or funding in social media. This would enable staff to track and measure social media initiatives and their subsequent success or failure. The key with tracking social media initiatives is to ensure that all aspects are tracked from the actual message that was posted on Facebook to the number of click-throughs it received. Furthermore, if comments were made on social media about the message or if users interacted with the message other than on the company's Web site these would be tracked as well and offer an insight into what the consumers of the specific company are looking for.

All social media practitioners would find interest in an easy way to measure success, however, based on the data contained herein, there doesn't seem to be any easy reference. Despite that, further study into how fan growth or increased followers affect traffic would be vital to future success. Understanding the chicken or the egg problem of increased social

media traffic and increased fan engagement would enable practitioners to break into social media measurement successfully.

## References

- Bump, Philip. 2010. *Facebook open graph: social metadata for everything*. Mediaite. <http://www.mediaite.com/online/facebook-open-graph-social-metadata-for-everything/>
- Cohen, Sande and R. L. Rutsky. 2005. *Consumption in an age of information*. Oxford, England: Berg Publishing.
- Cohen, Stacey and Marina Molenda. 2010. *Avoiding Social Mediocrity: Why Marketers Need to Reframe Their Thinking and Embrace Social Media*. <http://www.marinamolenda.com>
- Connor, Angela. 2010. *Here's why you can't leave a community unmanned*. Online Community Strategist. <http://blog.angelaconnor.com/2010/06/11/heres-why-you-cant-leave-a-community-unmanned/>
- CMOs say budget cut by 20% or more: Forrester*. Direct Mag. <http://directmag.com/online/news/cmo-budget-cut-forrester-0709/>
- Gattiker, Urs. 2009. *Measuring social media ROI: why it fails*. Social Media Today. <http://www.socialmediatoday.com/SMC/143935>
- Godin, Seth. 2005. *What every good marketer knows*. Seth Godin's Blog. [http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths\\_blog/2005/05/what\\_every\\_good.html](http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2005/05/what_every_good.html)
- Granger, Sarah. 2010. *Social media privacy experts to draft users' bill of rights next week in the Bay Area*. SF Gate.



<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi->

[bin/blogs/sgranger/detail?blogid=157&entry\\_id=65290](http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/blogs/sgranger/detail?blogid=157&entry_id=65290)

Hall, Star and Chadd Rosenberg. 2009. *Get Connected: The Social Networking Toolkit for Business*. Wisconsin: Entrepreneur press.

Jenkins, Henry, Xiaochang Li, and Domb Krauskopf. 2010. *Viral marketing: how to transform content into a meme that spreads like a virus online*.

Master New Media. <http://www.masternewmedia.org/viral-marketing-how-to-trasform-content-into-a-meme-that-spreads-like-a-virus>

Klein, Lauren. 2010. *Compassionate Community Communications*.

Community Composers.

<http://communitycomposers.wordpress.com/2010/05/21/compassionate-community-communications/>

Liew, Wayne. 2010. *Five social media marketing pitfalls beginners must avoid*. Wayne Liew. <http://www.slideshare.net/WayneLiew/5-social-media-marketing-pitfalls-beginners-must-avoid>

McDougall, Mike. 2010. *Conquering the 24-second news cycle*. PRSA.

[http://www.prsa.org/Learning/Seminars/view/654/Conquering\\_the\\_24\\_Second\\_News\\_Cycle](http://www.prsa.org/Learning/Seminars/view/654/Conquering_the_24_Second_News_Cycle)

Molenda, Marina. 2010. *Five social media pitfalls to avoid*. Social Media Today. <http://www.socialmediatoday.com/SMC/184916>

Moss, Curt. 2010. *The pitfalls of social media*. Weblink Blog.

<http://blog.Weblinkinternational.com/blog/Weblink-international/0/0/the-pitfalls-of-social-media>

Parr, Ben. 2009. *Facebook connect implications*. Mashable.

<http://mashable.com/2009/01/12/facebook-connect-implementations/>

Parr, Ben. 2010. *Facebook makes major announcements at F8*. Mashable.

<http://mashable.com/2010/04/21/facebook-f8-2/>

Petrecca, Laura. 2008. Dr Pepper joins others stung by social media. *USA*

*Today*, December 8, page 4b. [http://0-](http://0-search.ebscohost.com.bianca.penlib.du.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=J0E224118207408&site=ehost-live)

[search.ebscohost.com.bianca.penlib.du.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=J0E224118207408&site=ehost-live](http://0-search.ebscohost.com.bianca.penlib.du.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=J0E224118207408&site=ehost-live)

Rosenstiel, Tom, Danah Boyd, Dylan Casey, and Amanda Lenhart. 2010.

*Millennials, media, and information*. Pew Research.

<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1516/millennials-panel-two-millennials-media-information>

Rubinson, Joel. 2010. *Marketers, researchers, lend me your ears*.

Brandweek; 2/15/2010, Vol. 51 Issue 7, p34-34, 1p [http://0-](http://0-Web.ebscohost.com.bianca.penlib.du.edu/ehost/detail?vid=1&hid=17&sid=c2c21f5f-ff35-4865-9f94-7663fa0ba163%40sessionmgr12&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=a9h&AN=48190890)

[Web.ebscohost.com.bianca.penlib.du.edu/ehost/detail?vid=1&hid=17&sid=c2c21f5f-ff35-4865-9f94-](http://0-Web.ebscohost.com.bianca.penlib.du.edu/ehost/detail?vid=1&hid=17&sid=c2c21f5f-ff35-4865-9f94-7663fa0ba163%40sessionmgr12&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=a9h&AN=48190890)

[7663fa0ba163%40sessionmgr12&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=a9h&AN=48190890](http://0-Web.ebscohost.com.bianca.penlib.du.edu/ehost/detail?vid=1&hid=17&sid=c2c21f5f-ff35-4865-9f94-7663fa0ba163%40sessionmgr12&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=a9h&AN=48190890)

Scott, David Meerman. 2009. *The new rules of marketing and PR*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Strauss, Judy, Adel El-Ansary, and Raymond Frost. 2006. *E-Marketing*. 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Strout, Aaron. 2010. *4 keys to online community success*. Destination CRM. <http://www.destinationcrm.com/Articles/Web-Exclusives/Viewpoints/4-Keys-to-Online-Community-Success-67974.aspx>

Vollmer, Christopher and Geoffrey Precourt. 2008. *Always on: advertising, marketing, and media in an era of consumer control*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Warren, Christina. 2009. *How to: measure social media ROI*. Mashable. <http://mashable.com/2009/10/27/social-media-roi/>

Weinberg, Tamar. 2009. *The new community rules: marketing on the social Web*. California: O'Reilly Media.

Weinberg, Tamar. 2010. *How to use Facebook for business and marketing*. Techipedia. <http://www.techipedia.com/2010/how-to-use-facebook-for-business-and-marketing/>

## Appendix A

### **Survey Questions**

Respondents were asked to answer the following sixteen multiple-choice questions. The survey was designed to take participants between five to ten minutes to complete.

1. On a scale of 1-5 (1 = doesn't sound like me at all; 5 = sounds exactly like me), to what extent do you agree with the following statements:
  - a. I regularly use the Internet to find news and information on current events.
  - b. I visit social networking sites daily.
  - c. I think that social media (Facebook, Twitter) is fine for connecting with friends but I can't get reliable information there.
2. How long have you been active on social media sites?
  - a. I had the first Friendster account! (>8 years)
  - b. MySpace baby! (Before the bands, that is) (4-7 years)
  - c. Would you be my Facebook friend? (1-3 years)
  - d. How do I 'like' your company again? (<1 year)
  - e. None of the above makes a lot of sense...
3. What types of social networking do you use?
  - a. Facebook
  - b. Twitter
  - c. MySpace

- d. Ning
  - e. LinkedIn
  - f. Other
4. What sites do you visit daily?
- a. Facebook
  - b. Twitter
  - c. MySpace
  - d. Ning
  - e. LinkedIn
  - f. Google
  - g. Yahoo
  - h. News sites (CNN, FOX, MSNBC)
  - i. Blogs
  - j. Other
5. How much time do you spend on the Internet each week? (This can include social networking, watching videos, reading news sources, instant messaging, etc.)
- a. None - I do not get on the internet regularly
  - b. 1 - 9 hours
  - c. 10 - 19 hours
  - d. 20-29 hours
  - e. 30-39 hours

- f. 40-49 hours
  - g. 50 hours or more
6. Do you consider yourself spiritual, faithful, or religious?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
7. Do you consider yourself a preacher, seeker, or teacher/student?
- a. **Preacher**-a leader in the faith community, be they ordained or not
  - b. **Seeker**-a person seeking out faith, either their own or a new belief system
  - c. **Teacher/Student**-a person who seeks academic resources, looking for reliable, peer reviewed content
  - d. Not Interested
  - e. Other
8. When you have faith questions (whether your own or about your neighbors faith or belief), where do you go to seek information?
- a. Church/ Synagogue/ Mosque
  - b. Preacher/ Rabbi/ Imam
  - c. Friend who seems to know a lot about religion
  - d. Family
  - e. Internet - Google search
  - f. Internet-I have specific Web Sites I trust and always go back to

- g. I don't ask-too afraid
- h. I don't ask-not sure where to find quality information
- i. I don't – I don't have questions, I don't identify with religion or spirituality
- j. Other (please comment below)

9. Are you:

- a. Male
- b. Female

10. Age Range

- a. 18-25
- b. 26-35
- c. 36-45
- d. 46-55
- e. 56-65
- f. 65 +

11. Do you identify as:

- a. Caucasian/White
- b. Black
- c. Native American
- d. Pacific Islander
- e. Other

12. Where do you live?

- a. United States
  - b. Canada
  - c. UK
  - d. Europe
  - e. Israel
  - f. Other
13. If you live in the United States, what state do you live in?
- a. Drop down menu of states
14. What is your yearly income
- a. < \$20,000
  - b. \$20,000 - \$29,000
  - c. \$30,000 - \$39,000
  - d. \$40,000 - \$49,000
  - e. \$50,000 - \$59,000
  - f. \$60,000 - \$80,000
  - g. >\$80,000
  - h. Prefer not to answer
15. Are you a social media professional or work with social media as part of your profession?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
16. What industry do you work in?



- a. Internet (content delivery)
- b. E-commerce (retail, services)
- c. Education
- d. Non-profit
- e. Religious
- f. Brick and mortar retail or food service
- g. Other (please describe)