

**Bachelor of Science (IT Management)
Social Media Communications
Semester 2**

Module:
Social Media Communications

Group CA2

**Report Writing
Digital Communications**

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Submission Date: 15th April 2015

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Word Count

3,185

Declaration

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Executive Summary

The objective of this report is to evaluate the importance of Digital Communications and how it has evolved. We will also detail the impact Social Media has on business in today's world and take a close up look at how Intel use Social Media and why it is so important for them.

The conclusions that were formed during this report include:

1. Intel are market leaders in the fast paced world of Social Media.
2. A Social Media Strategy has kept them at the forefront of internet trends.
3. The various types of social media mediums Intel use has allowed them to showcase all elements of their business.
4. Intel encourages all their employees to use social media and have a set of guidelines to help them promote the company.

Based on these conclusions the report highlighted a number of recommendations that Intel should take into consideration. These include:

1. As Social Media grows it is important Intel keep their employees fully up to date as they are partly responsible for promoting Intel through Social Media
2. The Intel Social Media Strategy must continue to keep up with trends.

One concern the report found was the lack of a worldwide campaign from Intel. Many companies try to captivate the world with a "trend" such as a video or picture that takes off and travels between the social media platforms across many countries. This hasn't been the case for Intel; perhaps it is down to the nature of products Intel sell.

Terms of Reference

This report was commissioned by Aisling Duhy, lecturer of the Social Media Communications module as part of an assessment for that module within the Bachelor of Science in IT Management at the Institute of Technology Tallaght.

Introduction

In today's world Social Media is more important than ever. It is truly a 24/7 business with a rapid growth rate. It has opened up many opportunities for small businesses, it has created a people power presence and has made many large companies rethink their advertising strategy.

Trends and campaigns have captured audiences from one continent to the next, online reviews have scrutinized products and businesses more than ever. Historically companies have invaded our social activities with their advertising, for example whether watching TV, reading a newspaper, or going to a sporting event, you are almost guaranteed to see an advertisement or a sponsor from a company. When Facebook started this was a new way for people to be social and it wasn't long until businesses tapped into this market. In the online article "Social Business: How Social Media has changed Business as we know it!" it states *"As you can see, Social Media isn't just all about sharing photos and opinions. It can actually help businesses grow in multiple ways, from educating consumers on products and services, to promoting the same products and services to consumers, to helping in the development of those products and services internally. It also can be used to organize and promote discussions internally and to help companies communicate effectively and efficiently in order to help streamline inter-department actions. Look for more and more companies in the near future take advantage of social media both internally and externally."*

In this report we will look at the different forms of digital media and how it has evolved over the years. We will also be taking an in depth look into how one of the largest technology companies in the world use Social Media.

Section 1: Critical Evaluation of Digital Communications

1.1 What is Digital Communication?

To focus our report, communication means the process by which ideas, information, opinions, attitudes and feelings are conveyed from one person or group to another. Digital communication however, as defined in thefreedictionary.com (2015), electronic transmission of information that has been encoded digitally (as for storage and processing by *computers*).

Digital as opposed to **analog** communication, refers to the kind of signal understood by digital devices such as computers. Marakas and O'Brien (2013) stated, in an *analog system*, an electrical voltage or current is generated that is directly proportional to the quantity being observed. In a *digital system*, the quantity being observed is expressed as a number. Furthermore, they stated, because a digital system doesn't need to generate a proportional voltage for every input being observed, it requires far less power to operate than an analog (system).

From the onset, we learned that digital communication may mean differently to others and there is nothing wrong with that. What we will discuss in this report are digital technologies involving internet, social media, mobile technology, big data, cloud, etc. It's about the what, why and where digital communication is transforming the way people, organizations and businesses live and interact with each other and what is anticipated in the near future.

1.2 Types of Digital Communication activities

Marakas and O'Brien (2013) enumerated the following:

- **Surf.** *Browse and move your mouse pointer through to a multitude of interlinked Web sites and resources for multimedia information, entertainment, or electronic commerce.*
- **e-Mail.** *Send and receive e-mail and instant messages with family, friends, colleagues, business partners and other internet users.*
- **Forum.** *Join message boards and discussion forums of special-interest newsgroups, or hold real-time text conversations in Web site chat rooms.*
- **Publish.** *Publish your opinion, subject matter, or creative work to a Web site or Weblog for others to read.*
- **Buy and Sell.** *Buy and sell almost anything via e-commerce retailers, wholesalers, service providers, and online auctions.*
- **Connect.** *Socialise with friends, acquaintances, and business associates through social media.*

1.3 Why is Digital Communication important for business?

Because of the internet, a network of billions of devices, such as computer devices, mobile devices, individuals, organizations, and businesses have access to not only news but email and free audio and video calls from families and associates. Catching up with the latest trend in entertainment, fashion, health, and what have you is easy so long as one has internet connection.

What about friends and acquaintances? *Social media*, a form of digital communication has transformed the way we socialise. Mehta (2013), wrote:

“Social media has changed the world. Dismissed as a teenage fad just a few years ago, it is now embraced by powerful brands and small retailers, politicians and celebrities, charities and causes and anyone else who has an internet connection and wishes to perform one of the most basic functions of human existence – socialise”.

While Facebook or Twitter is keeping the channels of social media abuzz with the latest happenings of the day, Amazon has transformed the way we shop. Why leave the comforts of your room when at the flick of a finger you can buy the latest gadgets or accessories for your car at a reasonable price. Not only that, Amazon gives you the benefit of reviews and recommendations of those who have bought the same products. Because of these reviews, sellers now think twice before putting up an advertisement that is far removed from what the product actually is. So much power is now in the hands of the consumer because of digital communication. As a result, businesses have gone back to the drawing board to rethink their strategies moving forward. A huge number of companies now hire consulting firms specialising in digital transformation with the end in view of engaging their digitally connected customers more positively. Businesses get involved in social media not only to gain customers or get closer to them but engage them in rehabilitating a damaged reputation. For example, Kim Nash (2014) reported about Domino's Pizza campaign in 2010 through social media after a dissatisfied customer complained by posting a “messy pizza” delivered to him on the web. As a result, the pizza company suffered a backlash and found its reputation in tatters. The company, through the same channel of social media has slowly rebuilt its reputation back albeit not without investing a considerable amount of resources.

A number of major retailers and businesses have gone the receivership route during this recession or have gone out of business altogether. However the business savvy

retailers have flocked to where it's warm: the hot and nimble hands of smartphone and tablet-toting consumers who want to buy right now. Nash (2009) quoting Drew Martin, chief information officer of Sony Electronics, "Out of recession develops one picture-finally of what true business-IT alignment looks like. IT is becoming part of the product offerings." Whether that's hotel kiosks, mobile banking, hospital patient portals or retail, chief information officers are getting their IT groups to the front line in the competition for consumer dollars.

Marakas and O'Brien (2013) added: Social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube have taken e-mail out of the equation, putting offers in front of customers on sites they already visit. Dell, JetBlue, WholeFoods and other big brands have pounced on Twitter as a marketing and promotion tool, tweeting special deals to followers. Dell for example, attributes more than \$2 million in sales to its Twitter accounts that promote offers to 1.4 million followers. ("15% off any Dell Outlet Inspiron laptop. Enter code at checkout...").

Digital communication has indeed levelled the playing field be it social media or some other platform. It allows businesses to engage customers in a more meaningful way, one that never existed before. Consequently reaping the rewards of vast sums of money and an incredible amount of goodwill. On the other hand consumers have powers in their hands through social media or via reviews and recommendation. One hundred forty words on Twitter and off a tweet goes potentially becoming viral, a message that could make or break a company.

1.4 Current trends in digital communication

Digital communication technologies will continue to evolve so long as people, organizations, and businesses have the urge to stay connected. With an ever increasing appetite for growth and efficiency, businesses today rely heavily on technology. Some are constantly on the watch for the next big thing and others are collaborating with other businesses to build on technology they already have.

A report, Accenture Technology Vision 2015 (2015), published by the consulting firm, Accenture, highlights five key areas that would have great impact in the next three to five years on digital technology.

1. The Internet of Me

As objects are connected online every day, so too are experiences, allowing avenues opened up for innovative businesses to adapt and develop applications, products and services that would appeal to the consumer. The report expressed, about an infinitely greater number of touch points being created day by day — new ways to give more personalized and better experiences. These intensively personalized experiences, will be the way business competitors identify themselves with marked distinction.

2. The Outcome Economy

Intelligent hardware is bridging the great divide of digital enterprise and the physical world. So much so that businesses are creating hardware with embedded systems with the end view of delivering outcomes customers really want. In the report, 87 percent of respondents claimed that greater emphasis on the use of intelligent hardware, sensors and devices on the fringe of networks meant a change to selling outcomes, and similarly providing a deeper insight of how customers use their products and the outcomes they want.

3. The Platform Revolution

The report quoted, “In 2013, 14 of the top 30 global brands by market capitalization were platform-based companies”. These companies now enjoy commanding positions in business arenas where suppliers, purchasers, and a mixture of third parties are connected digitally in real time.

Platform-based ecosystems, the report says, are the “new plane of competition.” A majority of business representatives believe the next generation of platforms will be spearheaded by industry players and leaders, not the usual large tech companies. Almost the same percentage at 74, indicated they are collaborating with digital business partners to integrate data through cloud or mobility platform. Building onto this foundation onwards will consequently open up avenues for improving business processes and creating paths of additional revenue streams as well.

4. The Intelligent Enterprise

Until recently, software has been designed, for the majority of its purpose, to help human employees arrive at improved and quicker decisions. But due to rapid development in big data technologies, processing power advancing in leaps and bounds, data analytic and cognitive technologies, mean software intelligence is now also geared to helping machines themselves make more, better-informed decisions. Business and technology leaders now have the impetus to view software intelligence not as an isolated or one-time project experimentation, but as an all-inclusive feature and functionality — “one that will drive new levels of evolution and discovery, propelling innovation through the enterprise,” the report says.

5. The Workforce Re-imagined

The report in essence suggests, that the drive to go digital is stressing the need more fully for humans and machines to work together more cohesively. The proliferation of wearable devices, smart machines, and advances in NLPs (natural language processing) provide excellent opportunities for companies to enable their people to achieve more through technology.

Although machines may have become more intelligent they will never take the place of humans. Imagination, creativity, and sensitivity are few of the human traits that machines will never replicate. However perceptive businesses will recognize the value of human ingenuity and intelligent technology operating together in collaboration, two critical elements of the “re-imagined workforce”.

Section 2: Intel Corporation Case Study

For our case study we chose Intel because they are one of the leading technology companies in the world. As IT students we thought it was a great opportunity to interview this company as Ireland is Intel's centre of manufacturing excellence in Europe. For this interview we focused on how the company uses Social Media. Below is a report on the feedback we found most useful for this study, for full transcript of this interview please see Appendix A.

2.1 Company Background

Intel Corporation was founded in July 1968 by Gordon Moore, Robert Noyce and Andy Grove. They first made its name by making semiconductors. Today they are the world's leading manufacturer of microprocessors.

2.2.1 How Intel Use Social Media

Intel first started using Social Media a few years ago and currently use Twitter, Facebook and Blogs. Intel believe it is an effective way to communicate what the company does, post news releases, advertise their services and share stories online.

Facebook and Twitter would certainly be the most popular forms of social media but Intel also have their own unique social media platform here in Ireland, this is called “Intel Newsroom Ireland”. The Intel Newsroom is a very clever way of connecting with people because it is linked in with Facebook and Twitter, people can get live news feeds of what’s happening in Intel, watch videos, tweet on the website and share on Facebook.

We found this website very innovative as it is a way for Intel to have a company website but still keep in touch with social media. According to online blog “Is Facebook Killing The Company Website” it states that *“Website Traffic Is Down By More than 70%”*

Some of the reductions in website traffic are significant.

Coca Cola’s website traffic is down more than 40% in just 12 months

Starbucks traffic is stable but not growing

Nabisco’s traffic on NabiscoWorld.com has decreased from 1.2 million hits per month to only 321,000 hits per month (a drop of nearly 74%) in just one year”.

Such figures are common amongst many websites. Should they keep a company website or should they hand it over to Facebook, this is a decision faced by many companies but we think Intel have got it right with the Intel Newsroom.

2.2.2 Keeping Up With Social Media

Social media is a rapidly changing industry, new forms of social media are being released constantly and what’s “trending” changes day to day. Keeping up with this requires a Social Media Strategy. Intel’s Social Media Strategy requires a hard working team to come up with new ideas, monitor trends and work closely with the different platform vendors.

2.2.3 Social Media Guidelines

Most Intel employees use social media and when posting or commenting about the company they believe in using Social Media guidelines, they call these the “3 Rules Of Engagement”

Rule 1 - Disclose

Being transparent is important; use your real name, be yourself and keep up to date.

Rule 2 - Protect

It is important to remember that when you're online everything you post is made public. Therefore it is important to be cautious and don't give away confidential information about the company.

Rule 3 - Use Common Sense

There's no need to respond to every criticism, be careful on how you chose to reply and keep your cool.

2.2.4 Types of Social Media Intel Use

Facebook- Facebook is taking the company to a new level of communication.

Users feel they can interact with Intel on a more personal level and having a fan page on Facebook is far more effective than mass media.

Twitter- This is a great way for Intel to express a brand personality while also directly engaging with their audience. People who “follow” Intel can get live “tweets” (messages) from the company and retweet if they agree or reply if they don’t.

Instagram – By using Instagram, Intel can tap into consumer creativity by sharing pictures of Intel products and services and then get ideas from consumers on design of future products.

LinkedIn- By creating a professional profile, Intel has created a community for potential and actual employees. With daily updates Intel increases brand visibility.

Pinterest- Using Pinterest is like writing a book with a lot of pictures and manuals for products. This is another way for Intel to create awareness by posting their ideas and linking them to the company website. Intel’s use of Pinterest often features a remarkable story, philanthropy and really promotes Intel in the community.

YouTube- This extends brand messaging through video content and also increases Search Engine Optimization. It’s a platform which enables users to engage with the Intel brand through competitions, celebrity endorsement and charity work.

Conclusion

Digital Communications has always transformed business, using a telephone removed the need for knocking door to door, email makes it possible to send one message to multiple addresses, now Social Media has enabled businesses to reach an audience larger than ever.

Social Media is a relatively new form of Digital Communication, in the online article “How Social Media Is Changing Business” it states *"The idea that social media is some kind of fad is ridiculous," Kidron says. "It's how we communicate. New companies will have social media in their DNA. Some will do it badly, some will not be quite right, and some will change the way things are done. The most important thing is to make sure that social media has a unique purpose and is not just an adjunct or gimmick."* This certainly proved to be true for Intel, they are a company that knows Social Media is here to stay and they are embracing it.

For a large multinational technology company it is not just enough to be on Facebook or Twitter, leading the way and utilizing all possible social media platforms is something Intel believes strongly in.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Can you give us some background on what your company does?

Intel was founded in 1968 and first started by making semi-conductors. Now we are the world's largest manufacturer of microprocessors. Our facility here in Ireland is Intel's center of manufacturing excellence in Europe.

How does Intel Ireland use social media to transform the way they do business?

We have a Facebook and Twitter account in Ireland with we add content to regularly, it is a cheap and effective in getting our message across. Intel worldwide use most forms of social media.

Which do you prefer and why? Twitter as it is easier to contact through and you have a better idea of what is going on with hashtags

What do you think are the benefits of engaging your customers through social media? We believe it is an effective way to allow people to be aware of the events we do, we share of stories online. Like the Intel Newsroom.

Can you give an example of one of your social media campaigns and describe its impact compared to traditional forms of media? We generally don't run a campaign here in Ireland, we follow standard content that sales and marketing send us.

As one of the leading technology companies in the world, do you think it is important to keep up to date with the latest forms of social media?

Yes it is a very effective way of communicating with people. Intel lead the way when it comes to Social Media, we don't just use Facebook and Twitter, new types of Social Media are being released all the time, like Pinterest and Instagram, so Intel are always one of the first to join.

How do you see social media evolve over the next few years? And how do see your company part of this? It will become more important no doubt and we like other businesses will move with it.

What are the do's and don'ts for companies using social media? Make sure your spelling and grammar is correct, keep posts simple and to the point, don't over post anything. Look up our Social Media Guidelines.

Do you deal with customer complaints over social media? As these are on public domain how do you handle these as opposed telephone or email complaints? We generally don't get consumer complaints about our products as we don't sell our products, Intel Ireland is a manufacturing plant so we only make the technology that goes into the product, If you have a customer service issue, we recommend going to <http://www.intel.com/go/supportcommunity> for the fastest path to resolution

Do you monitor how your competitors use social media? If so why? No we don't monitor competitors, we only monitor our analytics.

Can you give an example of a complaint that got a lot of publicity and how did you handle this? Any large complaint we get is handled by our marketing department which is not based in Ireland, we work together to handle complaints which we rarely get.

