



TECHNO

THE BIG IDEAS THAT ARE CHANGING EVERYTHING

TRENDS

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

BY DANIEL BURRUS, CEO OF BURRUS RESEARCH



The new frontier of Web 2.0 is not just about informing your customers; it's about communicating with them.

Today's Web 2.0 tools, such as blogs, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and the many other social media options, are all about customer engagement.

When you send your prospects or clients an email, a mailer, or a newsletter, or when you place a TV, radio, or print ad, you're informing your readers about something. Those are information age tools that still have a purpose. However, social media is about the communication age. You're attempting to create a dialogue, trying to get engagement, and hoping to elicit a response. So it's not just about talking; it's about listening. Ultimately, social media is not about the media. It's about the social – about trying to get people talking about something important to them and to your business.

WHAT'S YOUR FOCUS

In order to make the best business use of social media, your organization needs to pinpoint the specific message you want to put out so that all employees have a guide to follow – so they

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SOCIAL GUIDELINES *(continued from page 1)*

know what direction their messages should take and how they should focus their posts. In other words, is your company's focus to increase customer service? To enhance awareness of your products or services? To boost your brand recognition? Each of these things would have a different consistent message for your employees to focus on.

For example, one insurance company uses Twitter and Facebook to let people know all the philanthropic things they are doing for the community. All the posts are about events they're sponsoring and contributions they're making. Employees know that they should post information about personal things they're doing for the community, such as volunteering at the local animal shelter or helping out with Habitat for Humanity. With a clear guideline that the social media effort is to increase philanthropic awareness, it's easy for employees to know the kinds of things they should be doing on social media sites. They have a clear focus and a unified purpose.

Another company in the retail industry uses social media to improve customer service. All their posts highlight things they're doing internally to improve the customer experience, what they're doing online to make shopping easier, and how they're handling phone inquiries to deliver a memorable shopping experience. They also regularly ask customers how they'd like the company to improve customer service. With that as the key message, all the company's employees are focused on problem solving and on making the customers happy. Therefore, a good social media strategy and employee guidelines are far more than a list of good and bad words or topics. Instead, they need to focus on the core message your company wants to portray and then determine the best ways to spread that core message. That's why upper management needs to take the time to determine the core message and share it with all employees.

CREATING THE GUIDELINES

Creating social media guidelines for your company does not have to be difficult. Once you get clear on the core message you want to send out and the dialogue you want them to engage with, you can use several tips that I will share with you next month on how to create guidelines that your staff can use to shape their posts around strategy and propel your message forward.

TECHNOLOGY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

FLOOD RESISTANT RICE

A new variety of rice called Swama-Sub1 has been approved for planting in India and Bangladesh. Also known as "scuba rice" it can survive more than two weeks submerged under water, allowing farmers to improve yields on land that is prone to flooding. While there are many species of flood-tolerant rice among the 100,000 or more seeds stored in gene vaults around the world, most of them produce disappointingly low yields. So researchers isolated the gene (SUB1A) that allows them to survive in flood conditions and transferred it into high yield varieties to produce the new seed line. Similar methods are being used to increase crop tolerance to heat, drought, pests, disease and even elevated atmospheric carbon dioxide levels. The genetically engineered species are part of an international effort to increase genetic diversity among plants that are cultivated for food.

For information: International Rice Research Institute, DAPO Box 7777, Metro Manila 1301, Philippines; phone: +63-(2)-856-6133; fax: +63-(2)-891-1236; Web site: www.iri.org

FROM "MOBILE-TO-MOBILE" TO "FACE-TO-FACE"

A new mobile application takes social networking and kicks it up a notch. Called Foursquare, it's designed to encourage face-to-face socializing by not only letting people know "what you're doing" but "where you are" so they can drop in and join you. Unlike similar services, Foursquare includes some elements of gaming and social competition to make it more fun. For example, points are awarded to players when they frequent a particular place, and the person who racks up the most points is dubbed "mayor" of that location. Businesses also use Foursquare to track their regulars and extend special

offers to their most loyal customers. The free service is about seven months old and has about 60,000 subscribers. Unlike Twitter, it's meant for networking with close friends, rather than thousands of "fans." Foursquare is currently available in 31 U.S. cities, three Canadian cities, London and Amsterdam.

For information: Dennis Crowley, Foursquare; email: dens@playfoursquare.com; Web site: www.foursquare.com

NEW E-BOOK READER

Barnes & Noble will be releasing its new e-book reader – Nook – in time for holiday gift-giving. It features a 6-inch e-paper display for reading, a touch screen for data input, plus 3G cell phone and WiFi connections for downloading. And if you take your Nook to a Barnes and Noble retail outlet, you can browse entire e-books for free. Another benefit of Nook is the ability to share single copies of an e-book with a friend. This feature is only available for e-books from participating publishers and the e-book can only be read on one device (Nook, cell phone or computer) at a time. With a built-in memory capacity of 2GB, Nook can store up to 1,500 titles, but with the addition of a memory card, storage can be increased to up to 17,500 titles.

For information: Barnes & Noble, Inc., P.O. Box 111, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071; phone: 800-962-6177; fax: 201-559-6910; Web site: www.barnesandnoble.com/nook/

SMART SPEED BUMPS

Speed bumps are a fact of life in urban areas around the world, but recent studies have shown that the driving pattern of constant acceleration and deceleration actually increases fuel consumption and pollutants, not to mention the wear and tear on a vehicle's suspension. Now a new device is being tested in Mexico that deters speeding but rewards drivers for staying at or near the speed limit. "Smart" speed bumps consist of two steel plates that protrude out of the pavement to form a triangle. A patented sensor measures the force of a car's impact. If it's traveling at the speed limit, the plates collapse; if not they remain raised to deliver the familiar jarring thump. It's estimated that the devices will cost about \$1,500 each (per lane) and will require about \$50 in maintenance annually. They require no electricity and will last about ten years under typical driving conditions.

For information: Decano Industries, Toluca, Mexico

CURVED DISPLAY

The latest in immersive display technology is CRVD™, a 43-inch diagonal curved panel that blends images from four miniature projectors to create one seamless display. The design has several advantages over multiple-monitor setups, including the fact that it engages 75 percent of peripheral vision. In addition to the obvious applications for simulations, training and gaming, CRVD can increase productivity in commercial and defense command and control settings. For broadcast applications, its fast response time makes it suitable for editing a variety of video formats. And the high resolution RGB LED light source accurately displays multiple medical images for diagnosis and comparison. The device lists for about \$6,500 (US).

For information: Ostendo Technologies, Inc., 6185 Paseo del Norte, Suite 200, Carlsbad, CA 92011; phone: 760-710-3000; fax: 760-710-3017; Web site: www.ostendotech.com

HYDROGEN POWER PLANT

A pilot project is underway in New Mexico that's aimed at storing the energy generated by renewable methods so that it can be used to generate electricity when needed. And the storage medium of choice is none other than hydrogen. The 600-acre plant can use direct current (DC) electricity from a variety of renewable sources – wind, solar, biomass, geothermal – to drive an age-old chemical process called electrolysis, which separates hydrogen and oxygen from water. The hydrogen is stored in underground tanks where it can later be tapped to generate power. As a fuel for producing electricity, hydrogen has three times the energy (pound for pound) as natural gas, but unlike traditional methods for generating power, it produces no carbon dioxide emissions, no heavy metal residue, and no radioactivity – just pure water. Other valuable by-products include ultra-pure liquid hydrogen and oxygen. The plant will be able to produce enough power to supply 6,000 families, and because it recycles water back through the system, it will only consume as much water as one residential home over the course of a year.

For information: Henry Herman, Jet Stream Wind, Inc., Jet Stream Initiative, Winds of Change, 19 Plaza La Prenza, Santa Fe, NM 87507; phone: 505-467-8134; fax: 505-467-8095; Web site: www.jetstreamwind.com

MICROSCOPE-ENABLED CELL PHONES

Bioengineers at UC-Berkeley have developed a microscope that attaches to a cell phone. Called CellScope, the device, which costs about \$75 to build, increases magnification from 5X to 50X to produce diagnostic quality images that can be transmitted anywhere in the world for evaluation. Eventually, a software application in the phone itself will allow for onsite diagnosis as well. CellScope has been tested using white light to capture images of red blood cells as well as using LED light and fluorescent dyes to selectively detect the presence of bacteria, such as tuberculosis in sputum samples. In addition to medical applications, agricultural experts are looking at the device as a means of detecting crop disease.

For information: Daniel Fletcher, University of California, Department of Bioengineering, 608B Stanley Hall #1762, Berkeley, CA 94720; phone: 510-643-5624; email: fletch@berkeley.edu; Web site: <http://cellscope.berkeley.edu>

“EXTREME” HOOK & LOOP

Since Velcro® was patented in 1955, hook and loop fasteners have been used in thousands products, from sports shoes to space suits. But because they are made of plastics, they don't stand up well in high temperature conditions or environments where corrosive chemicals are used. Now, a super heavy duty version has been developed that is designed for extreme applications. Called Metaklett, it is composed of perforated steel strips about 0.2 millimeters thick. On one side, there are springy steel brushes; on the other side are tiny, jagged spikes. When pressed together, a square meter can support up to 35 metric tones (approximately 77,000 pounds) at temperatures up to 800 degrees Celsius (about 1400 degrees Fahrenheit), and can be opened and closed without any special tools. In construction applications, Metaklett is strong enough for building facades; as a fastener for automotive applications, it could withstand the extremes of temperature that occur in areas like exhaust manifolds.

For information: Josef Mair, Technical University of Munich, Institute of Metal Forming & Casting (UTG), Walther-Meissner Strasse, D 85747 Garching, Germany; phone: +49-89-289-14540; fax: +49-89-289-14547; email: Josef.mair@utg.de; Web site: www.utg.de or www.metaklett.de (German only)

ROBOTS CONTROLLED BY BRAIN CELLS

In a ground-breaking project called Animat, researchers are using live cultures of neurons to control robots. Up to now, they have used cells from the brains of rats to create neuronal circuits and study the function and development of neurons. The next step, which is already well on it's way, is to duplicate the experiments using human brain cells. This development platform will enable researchers to investigate the mechanisms of memory and learning as well as to test treatments for neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's Disease. It could also lead to the creation of truly autonomous robots for deep space exploration.

For information: Kevin Warwick, University of Reading, School of Systems Engineering, Whiteknights, P.O. Bo 217, Reading, Berkshire, RG6 6AH, United Kingdom; phone: +44-(0)-118-378-8210; fax: +44-(0)-118-378-8220; email: k.warwick@reading.ac.uk; Web site: www.reading.ac.uk

NANOSHEETS

The extraordinary structural, thermal and electrical properties of carbon nanotubes make them highly useful for many commercial applications. However, current manufacturing processes have only been able to produce tiny structures (usually tens of microns in length) that are available in powder form. Now a patent-pending process has been developed to produce very long (millimeter length) carbon nanotubes that can be fabricated into fibers, yarns and even sheets. Applications include strong, yet lightweight cables, antennas and electromagnetic shields, as well as structural materials for the aerospace industry.

For information: Nanocomp Technologies, Inc., 162 Pembroke Road, Concord, NH 03301; phone: 603-442-8992; fax: 603-513-7119; Web site: www.nanocomptech.com

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