

SOCIAL MEDIA EVOLUTION

The second (1.1, totally free) eBook by:

Mark Essel

What's Inside?

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Introduction

Greetings and salutations. First I'd like to take a moment to thank you for taking the time to download and peruse my first foray into publishing. Much of the material for this short eBook is freely available on my blog at <http://www.victusspiritus.com/>. But as an avid blog reader myself, I understand it's often easier to spend time carefully digesting material covering lengthy topics in a book like format. With that in mind, I've reorganized and edited some of my work over the past few months into an ebook.

Social Media Evolution was crafted with a focus on helping people understand the value and capabilities of changing social technology. The goal is to help those both new and familiar to leverage the fantastic new tools available.

Social Media Evolution

How to Web Market and Use Social Media

What steps can you take to increase your number of readers?

First make yourself comfortable with the idea of tooting your own horn online. If you don't shout out that you have something worth reading, it's unlikely that anyone else will discover it anytime soon. If you can join a small community of like minded individuals it makes spreading your ideas even faster. Not only will you have the constructive criticism and shared views of other interested marketers, but you'll have people willing to review your material on crowd sourced social web sites.

- [Learn the Basics of Web Marketing and SEO](#) - What is "Web Marketing"? It's the virtual soap box you have to stand on to get an audience. While many writers become authors because they feel a need to write, without readers your words will have little impact. Since it's my deepest hope to inspire people, to instigate critical thinking and focus I for one am working to find readers.
- [Make Sure Your Content is Excellent](#) -The design methods introduced are by no means hard and fixed. Some are impractical from a financial view for any single generation. They are simply one authors suggested guidelines to begin answering a hypothetical question: *"What I can do to create effective content, be it media or written text?"*

Why be concerned with social media?

- [Social Media Is the Meeting Point of the Viral Spread of Ideas With Social Content Generation](#) - Much like the rapid growth of radio, then TV in the 20th century, social media is now experiencing explosive growth across the internet.

Social Media
University



How to begin using social media:

- [Use Twitter to Keep Track of what's going on](#)
 - In case you just landed on Earth, [Twitter](#) is a tool that feels like part chat room, part news feeder, part network marketer. Seriously try it out with a browser addon, and check the public channel to find interesting tweets.
- [Take this Short Twitter Tutorial](#)
 - This twitter tutorial page is designed for entry level twitter users, or folks who have never used twitter before. It will cover the basics of signing up, grabbing an easy to use interface, and much of the lingo and basic functionality of twitter.
- [What can be accomplished with twitter?](#) -
There's a strong correlation with our deep biologically programmed need for belonging and social networking on the internet. We are much more willing to accept advice from a trusted friend than from a search algorithm about where to find pertinent information.
- [Social Media isn't new to Infosaur Robert Scoble](#) -
Mr. Robert Scoble, known to many in the online community as the Scobleizer, is one of the trailblazers in a new field I like to call *Virtual Omniscience*. He's basically monitoring the pulse of the world via the internet, or at least a sizeable slice of human experience. By applying twitter and friend feed with his personal dynamic quality filters he keeps pace with what's happening and is connecting with an interested audience of thousands of individuals.
- [Intelligent Advertising for Microbloggers: Who will be first to swim in the riches?](#) - The utility of twitter as a profit engine has been a growing concern for Evan Williams. Other social services are quickly adapting to the popularity of microblogging within their own social media structures (Facebook, FriendFeed). While I have posted on the potential of twitter before, the real value is in the datamining application of microblogging.
- [It more than makes sense for Google to acquire twitter, it makes money](#)
 - It appears I jumped the gun some time ago with my post "[twitter is on the verge of eating Google for breakfast](#)", here's why. Google is well aware of it's "breakfast" and is more than likely to make a YouTube like deal with twitter. Google is actively tweeting with it's account, "acknowledging" the service (Oprah's tweeting why not). Here are just a few reasons why it's a match made in heaven.

Social Media Will Be the Dominant Design Focus of the 21st Century

By [Mark Essel](#) | Published: March 29, 2009 | [Edit](#)

Much like the rapid growth of radio, then TV in the 20th century, social media is now experiencing explosive growth across the internet. We as a species have yet to realize the enormous potential of a fully connected real time network of global human consciousness and electronic data. Social design requires a very open framework between contributing parties, therefore tools that are open source are likely to receive the most benefit from a heavily connected network perspective, and the corresponding gigantic problem solving

ability. Leveraging that creative potential into focused pieces of work has proven to be incredibly challenging in some areas, and quite natural in others.

The working definition for social media from [wikipedia](#) in respect to the post “Social media is information content created by people using highly accessible and scalable publishing technologies that is intended to facilitate communications, influence and interaction with peers and with public audiences”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpEnFwiqdx8&feature=player_embedded

(the above video can be found [here](#))

Now consider some of the breakthrough recent design developments. In the gaming industry the ceiling of entertainment was literally torn off by Massive Multiplayer Online gaming (Ultima Online, Everquest, World of Warcraft) or for smaller network games (Counterstrike, Halo, Call of Duty). The value of these types of software was enormously increased by the ability to connect to other people with similar interests and share in the experience.

How about online video? YouTube video sharing is with little doubt one of the most potent video platforms second only to Google in web page link following. The power of YouTube is more than just free hosting. It connects people to content they are interested in, personalizing the message to what the viewer is seeking.

Social networking via blogging, myspace, facebook, twitter, friendfeed, linkedin all have social media incorporated to their powerful connection tools. The value of any social network only increases with size. Power in numbers.

Still think social media is a fad? Well you may be right according to Matt Dickman’s article, [When everything becomes social, what is “social media”](#). His vision is one where social media is ubiquitous throughout all products, precisely why it will be the dominant design tool/focus.

Free information and one media solution that I’d subscribe to

[Books, magazines, and even entire libraries](#) are becoming freely available online. What would happen if all information was free? How would this change what you read, watched, and listened to?

The value would come in how novel, interesting and useful the media experience was to us. The company that best matched the media to me would be the most successful, and should be the most profitable. While there are wildly popular books, magazines, and films

and these generate huge profits for their publishers/producers, how would this novel media system generate revenue?

We're tired of ads. We automatically filter out any advertisements that are not pertinent to what we're seeking, so advertisements would have to be brilliantly threaded into the media product for them to be most effective. So although ads are annoying, they can make media free. Don't care for ads? There's a simple solution, subscribe with a monthly cost.

One media solution would provide everything I need to stay connected, global web access, free web phone, free music selection, free tv & films, and free books/magazines/blogs. For maintaining an optimal network (or perhaps one of several competing physical networks) they would receive a share of the advertising revenue or media subscriptions.

While this may appear to be a far off potential future, the web moves faster than anyone would have first imagined when it comes to evaluating potential media. Think about how fast Netflix evolved with its system of DVD mailing, to instant downloading and how quickly Blockbuster adapted to remain competitive. It is my belief that this systemic business evolution foretells the future of media marketing and monetization.

Kindle 2 moves control of text-to-speech feature from user to publisher

(update the [Kindle DX](#) will be available soon)

While it's a lovely device due to the readability, storage, size, and efficiency. The [Kindle 2](#) is still subject to the whim of the [large book publishers it seems](#), and therefore any information that

flows through the device will be ruled by a consortium of folks with an outdated view on media ownership and control. Here's an excerpt of the news [post from CNET](#):

"On Friday, Amazon announced it would reconfigure the Kindle 2's systems to allow publishers to disable the text-to-speech function for titles of their choosing. However, the retailer made it clear in the announcement that it believed text-to-speech did not violate copyright."

Publishers will control the text-to-speech feature.

This type of feature change after the release of a product is frightening or at the very least damaging to Amazon's market position for its Kindle Books, which makes it harder for [web marketers and information merchants](#) to pitch the device to potential customers.

It amazes me that we are finding new ways to value information for its pertinence, quality, and timeliness on the internet but our vast riches of older written information must suffer in its availability due to old thinking.

I suggested a [simple solution](#), one media rule that rewards any media authors based on the popularity of their works as well as sociably redeeming qualities. The capitol can be generated via ads to free users, or by subscriptions to those that prefer to avoid ads.

Use Twitter to Keep Track of what's going on

In case you just landed on Earth, [Twitter](#) is a tool that feels like part chat room, part news feeder, part network marketer. Seriously try it out with a browser addon, and check the public channel to find interesting tweets.

I suggest grabbing [twitbin](#) if you use Firefox. It creates a side window that's getting a constant stream of updates. Unfortunately, I'm still new so I'm learning tweeter netiquette. You can follow me at [VictusFate](#) I'll follow you back 😊 (and I'll keep following as long as you don't spam me about how to get rich via flying carpet sales and black magic)

UPDATE

[Twitter Netiquette](#)

I added some of my favorite Twitter tools/applications/websites to [my web marketing tutorial](#)

Of course I just came across this twitter segment from the Daily Show:

[Twitter Frenzy from the Daily Show](#)

What can actually be accomplished with twitter?



My first instinct, and I'm sure I'm not alone in this, was the childlike king of the mountain rush to get as many followers and popularity as I could. It was only for a moment before I abandoned this path (mostly), before I thought about what I would do even if I could gain an instant of interest from the entire community.

After several hours of using twitter, specifically my web browser and TweetDeck, I've been getting a feel for the type of information flow available. It all comes down to the type of people you follow and the tools you use to sift through the data. If you follow intelligent, insightful individuals/companies you are likely to get introduced to some fantastic web content that you may have missed from other paths. The feel of twitter is a mashup of instant messenger (but on a slower time scale) with status updates (Facebook) and a human powered web catalog (much like Digg, Stumble Upon, Reddit, etc). It's easy to follow suggested links and quickly lose track of time as you continually discover fascinating new perspectives and stories about the world we live in, and fantasies of [what it may be](#).

As with any tool, you have to determine what you want to get out of twitter, and then use it appropriately. If you make well thought tweets about engaging topics you're likely to grow your follower list. But what are you going to do if every person on Earth follows your 140character one liners? Are you going to sell them something? Or is there the faintest chance that something super cognitive and real can come out of the masses of status update minutia? Artificial intelligence spawned from a swarm of natural intelligences, the possibilities are fascinating and nearly endless.

Here are just a few compelling reasons for using tweeter now:

1. The first application feeds into how twitter can monetize it's addictive network. I'm beginning to think there is great potential in sorting through the information that people tweet about (the collection). The post analysis could do much to improve our knowledge of how information flows in [swarm intelligence](#). This information could be sold to big marketing companies with an excellent premium/monthly subscription, and it would be dynamically updated.
2. It's like a real time white board where your community of chosen leaders can pass along their most precious information. Initially I believed twitter would have a greater market impact if the number of tweets per day were limited, but realize now that over tweeting will just result in a natural decline in followers. At the very least each user would more carefully choose what he would share with his followers. Either way more powerful filters and more frequent updates could both be beneficial in unison.
3. Marketing, marketing, marketing! In a rapidly increasing web space, making a connection with a potential interested customer can be a great way to spread ideas about your company or product. An ongoing relationship between consumer and company can strengthen both the happiness of the customer, and the wealthiness/healthiness of the business.
4. Feedback from the customer to the company. You can get real time information about what people like best about your current product, and what would be most desirable in the future.

One of the major drawbacks of twitter is that there is information overload. As much as I try, I can only concentrate on a few concepts at a time. There is a need for twitter addons/tools to help segregate the information into bite sized pieces. Luckily there's an ever growing list of people building products to help us sift through the mountain (I listed a few of them [here](#) along with some great reference pages). There is also a growing number of articles/bloggers dedicated to helping you make the most of your twitter experience (I

suppose I'm one of them now, although a neophyte).

- [Twitip](#)
- [Mr. Tweet](#)
- [Official Twitter Blog](#)

I'm in the process of using TweetDeck to organize those that I follow into categories...
*update I just catch up by doing a twitter search or going to a few friends twitter homepages.

Don't forget [twitter search](#) (the Summize guys started this, I think?)

And of course to leave off with some twitter fun: [from SuperNews](#)

twitter is on the verge of eating Google for breakfast, here's why

The web landscape is constantly changing, and with it our navigation tools are advancing. To support the hypothesis it's important that we first review a brief history of the internet. Initial communication networks were hubs set up with mainframes controlling information and terminals allowing access to that information. Separate localized computer networks developed and finally adopted a common network protocol merging information flow into what is now known as the Internet (From [wikipedia](#)).

Internet search tools, our navigators through this new virtual landscape of information, have their own, non-discrete evolutionary history. Long ago I used Lynx to browse the text web on a green and black CRT in college manually crawling websites. At that point I used Jump Station or the WWW Worm to navigate the web, but became frustrated with the difficulty to find useful sites. It wasn't until years later that Yahoo and graphics made the internet a helluva lot more pleasing to the eye and mind. There were a few popular search engines popping up (nothing memorable before Yahoo), but Alta Vista had the best match from my keywords, to what I wanted to read about. Somewhere along my web visits I dropped Alta Vista to try Google and I was hooked to their matching algorithm (based purely on the quality of search results).

The search engine development history:

- it started with simple keyword matching
- then people deciding the best pages and placing them on directories
- next moved to a powerful algorithm which is "centrally" controlled
- and now is shifting back to millions of users helping to maintain a quality score for websites

The social collective directory scoring is achieved by submitting sites, and grading those sites within social tools like twitter (Digg, Stumble Upon, Reddit, Hacker News, etc.).

So search had it's roots in crawlers that indexed (JumpStation) then merging this data with advanced directories (like Yahoo), then link following methods (Alta Vista and eventually Google) transformed the potential for search by having a massive database and powerful search algorithms. But there are times when we don't know the right questions to ask

(keywords) or how to judge the quality of information we're being overloaded with. Hierarchical social networking can help us quickly find the guru's and experts in specific fields and allow us to connect with them in real time about what's going on in their fields. We can communicate with them about how we may best benefit from those developments or simply review their findings.

The last few days I've been on a terrible [twitter](#) bender. I know it has untapped potential as a tool for increasing human interaction and knowledge (as long as the program speed can keep up with user volume). There's a strong correlation with our deep biologically programmed need for belonging and social networking on the internet. We are much more willing to accept advice from a trusted friend than from a search algorithm about where to find pertinent information. I suddenly can follow hundreds of thousands of potential advisers for content. The challenge is in filtering that data and finding the smaller number of trusted sources for what I most appreciate. Google hasn't customized to my search desires (yet) like a plethora of people.

With twitter we can find what's interesting and feel like we belong at the same time, something Google hasn't figured out yet.

As far as belonging, [John Donne](#) was an expert on the human connection following are a few quotes from his work [Devotions upon Emergent Occasions](#):

"All mankind is of one author, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated...As therefore the bell that rings to a sermon, calls not upon the preacher only, but upon the congregation to come: so this bell calls us all: but how much more me, who am brought so near the door by this sickness....No man is an island, entire of itself...any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

If the above reasons aren't compelling, here are six more reasons why twitter is going to supersede Google in [Gyutae Park's article](#).

Intelligent Advertising for Microbloggers: Who will be first to swim in the riches?

The utility of twitter as a profit engine has been a [growing concern for Evan Williams](#). Other social services are quickly adapting to the popularity of microblogging within their own social media structures (Facebook, FriendFeed). While I have posted on the potential of [twitter before](#), the real value is in the datamining application of microblogging.

The [Twitter Gold Mine & Beating Google to the Semantic Web](#) by Nick Bilton got me thinking about targeted advertising. What I commented on (and Nick didn't touch on), was that the profit engine in microblogging isn't necessarily the service. Sure you want your microblogging service to have a sizable community. But what you really want to provide is the best set of tools for user intent comprehension. **It's likely that the most powerful**

fully semantic data miner tools will be our first look at Artificial Intelligence.

Imagine a virtual personal assistant that tracked all your activities (microblog entries in this case). It can create pertinent products or activities by analyzing a combination of historic data from your past and collective data from others who share your current status. The “others” that comprise your data group could be people you follow, you are friends with, or are in the same geographical vicinity. For example, you’re visiting Columbus Ohio to meet some customers. While chatting after the meeting your virtual assistant conveniently texts your portable media device with the name and address of the most locally popular hibachi grill restaurant (because you love Hibachi while traveling). The algorithms will have to discern meaning from the microblog entries, hence the focus on semantic knowledge and A.I. They can then be processed by any number of estimation algorithms (clustering, matched filtering, other correlative techniques).

The software developers that can best deliver this function will earn titanic profits (from users and advertisers).

Ad Money Will Play “Follow the Leader” to the King of Links



What any advertising campaign ultimately wants to achieve is an improvement in company profits.

Historically this has been done with banners to interrupt and saturate potential customers with brand recognition. A small percentage of viewers will feel compelled to purchase the product. In the modern (ever changing) business landscape this is usually achieved by being in the right place, at the right time. Say I'm web browsing for great [fishing rods in San Francisco](#), if you showed up at the top of Google you're in a prime spot to further your business goal of making the connection between your business and me (an interested and willing buyer).

Increasingly, the flow of web links is being made between individuals via social media sites. Your good fishing buddy who knows the Bay area, shares a link to his favorite supply store. As focused communities become populated across geographic barriers, local quality referrals become more likely. But what if you want to know what store fishermen prefer in San Francisco? You could simply use twitter search for [fishing san francisco](#). In real time you could send a message to several individuals who are interested in fishing in that region. Successful social media will judge individuals by the quality of their referrals, the best will be known as field experts. This expertise will garner increased customer reaction and social pull, as well as equivalent advertising dollars. **Social networks that reward (profit sharing) their strongest referrers (crowd sourced link voting) and content builders will**

succeed, while those that try to hoard income will be abandoned like ghost towns.

A quick background for those unfamiliar with web advertising:

In the current web advertising system there are several cost structures for paid ads.

- CPM or Cost Per Thousand Impressions
- CPC or Cost Per Click
- CPA or Cost Per Action

Advertising dollars naturally flow to those services which yield the best (lowest) cost per action. A complication is that each marketing case (company/product/website) will have it's own dynamic conversion for impressions to clicks to action (i.e. a product purchase).

So what defines the link leader?

Easy, whoever “owns” the most referral links shall inherit advertising dollars. Right now it's the best search engines (Google for much of the world, Baidu for China and some of South East Asia).

But there is a change taking place. Users are proving that they don't need one company to tell them where to go. Social bookmarking sites are “self organizing” much of the real time internet. Digg, reddit, Delicious, twitter, and Facebook are some of the crowdsourcing website leaders. Email of course is another major social link sharing source.

People are being supplied great, desired content before they perceive a need to search for it. What this means for search monetization is that it will have to adapt to how people use the internet to find products.

Where is the opportunity space of tomorrow?

Future business opportunities will lie in optimizing the connection between potential consumers and companies. As this connection becomes stronger, it will push the best companies and products into larger shares of competitive market spaces. Outside of direct advertising, why do users promote a business within social media? Having excellent content, a compelling story, and being trusted are the pillars of a successful web business. A companies story has to be remarkable enough for me to share (or at least the best in it's neighborhood). Newcomers visiting the site have to trust it enough to take action (i.e. making a purchase on a website or signing up). Scam artists erode our trust in human referrals, so any successful social advertising business will have excellent tools for identifying and removing them from the system.

This post inspired by

- Fred Wilson's [The Power Of Passed Links \(continued\)](#) and
- Ian Kennedy and Udo Szabo's thoughts [Facebook, Twitter send more traffic than Google](#)

Infosaurus Robert Scoble “the Scobleizer” Redefines Internet Information Flow

Mr. Robert Scoble, known to many in the online community as the Scobleizer, is one of the trailblazers in a new field I like to call *Virtual Omniscience*. He’s basically monitoring the pulse of the world via the internet, or at least a sizeable slice of human experience. By applying twitter and friend feed with his personal dynamic quality filters he keeps pace with what’s happening and is connecting with an interested audience of thousands of individuals. I can only imagine the tools we’ll have at our finger tips 10 years from now thanks to he and his colleagues’ trendsetting.

Some power players send direct messages to Mr. Scoble to alert him of significant change (new products, companies, venture capitalists, etc.). He’s among a select few elite information/marketing gurus (maven) which include but aren’t limited to Chris Brogan, Scott Hanselman, Guy Kawasaki, Leo Laporte (nice chaps), and Prague Bob. Heck even MC Hammer is trying to follow ~26k users, and Stephen Fry 55k in their “wide band” twitter streams. These guys are different from the tech leader geniuses like Tim O’Reilly in that they sift through more real time data (Tim probably uses other information channels more heavily for his input and probably has a team of sharp information experts).

How Robert reads tweets <http://www.kyte.tv/ch/6118-scobleizer/357808-how-i-read-tweets>

Here are some links to some of the gentlemen I’ve mentioned:

- [Robert Scoble](#)
- [Chris Brogan](#)
- [Guy Kawasaki](#)
- [Scott Hanselman](#)
- [Leo Laporte](#)
- [Tim O’Reilly](#)
- [Robert Morrison \(Prague Bob\)](#)
- [MCHammer](#)
- [Stephen Fry](#)

Of course this is all the result of a sidetrack from an article I was going to write on social media’s changing influence on web marketing. Thanks again evil twitter stream (I’m compelled to follow all the interesting sounding links, oh no I’m falling behind!).

Here’s an overview of the major tools of any web marketing campaign:

- Social Media
- Web Article Authoring
- Directories
- Back Links from Influential Sites
- SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

SEO is an encompassing tool that is reinforced by some or all of the methods of web marketing, but it’s results are measured by rank for relevant searches for your business or

information topic.

[Traffic Cafe](#) with Jonathan Gunson is an excellent way to move your business forward with web marketing when you're ready to pay for expert advice. I enjoyed his video tips while reviewing twitter this morning so a link back is a simple way for me to say thanks Mr. Gunson.

I'll save social media for last (the best usually is privy to that position outside of boring presentations, and firefights) which brings us to web article authoring. They're a wonderful way to begin planting the seeds for your "message" whatever that may be. I personally chose [Ezine Articles](#) and have even gotten a few posts approved. I have plenty more to do, sometime soon I should think. So don't follow my lead and procrastinate, submit, submit, submit!

You could submit your posts, articles, and web pages to web directories for a link. I can't imagine this is very helpful these days but it's better than doing nothing at all. If you have any wild skill or luck in connections it's possible to get a back link from a power player site in a particular market. One link vote from a big site can do wonderful things to your page rank and visibility.

The design of a page can be preconceived in such a way as to have beneficial key words, titles and structure. You don't want to create web content that appears like junk to search engines and people alike. There are a variety of tools for measuring the most effective keyword combinations, but unfortunately I grow bored whenever I begin using them. What fun is it if I can't even create my own keyword combinations while writing?



Then there's the Giant Gorilla: social media marketing. Getting in front of thousands of pairs of eyes and allowing them to judge the utility and quality of your writing is the aspiring author's dream. Well actually getting incredible feedback to help hone one's writing skills and pursue a life long passion of significant social value is my personal dream. Some of the big players include Reddit, Digg, Stumble Upon, YC Hacker news, and now the super hot twitter. All twitter needs now is a Facebook looking front end to suck in the mainstream audience.

It more than makes sense for Google to acquire twitter, it makes money



It appears I jumped the gun some time ago with my post [twitter is on the verge of eating Google for breakfast, here's why](#). Google is well aware of it's "breakfast" and is more than likely to make a YouTube like deal with twitter. Google is actively tweeting with it's account, "acknowledging" the service (Oprah's tweeting why not). Here are just a few reasons why it's a match made in heaven:

twitter is becoming a powerful competitor in real time link sharing and search

Pro's like Fred Wilson are trying to understand the value of [The Power Of Passed Links](#) when it comes to conversions. The growth of social media for link sharing and converting is much larger in his ballpark figures than the growth of search. Google has to understand the strength of controlling a vested interest in social media.

Google has some of the best semantic interpretation tools available, or has the best people to develop them further

Google has been developing arguably the most powerful database in the world. Google is also the best in the world at understanding what people are looking for when they type in search terms. It doesn't take a huge logic leap to perceive the

financial power of [contextual advertising](#) applied to microblogging. The significant way for twitter to monetize is through contextual personalized advertising, and for this to happen they'll need powerful semantic interpreters and some pretty snappy data mining on the fly.

Google is able to purchase twitter now while it's still small (compared to Facebook which has aligned itself with Microsoft)

From a business standpoint, the timing couldn't be better for Google to align itself with twitter. Facebook has grown rather large and expensive for an acquisition, besides the fact that it already has a pretty strong ties to Microsoft (to the tune of \$200 million a year). Alternatively twitter is small and on the rise, and is a high value purchase, precisely because of what Google can bring to microblogging.

Google may want to consider purchasing [friendfeed](#) as well while they're price is relatively cheap.

Thanks to Fadi for his post [Is it time for Google to start tweeting?](#) , and Michael Arrington from Tech Crunch, [Sources: Google In Talks To Acquire Twitter \(Updated\)](#).

Sick and tired of paying extra for voice and SMS text message data!

What spark will ignite companies to bypass the wireless broadband providers choke hold? It's time to focus our national resources (in this case bandwidth) on innovating high speed internet for the entire nation. All parts of America need some good "old fashioned" free information internet. It can be started with government subsidies, some strong legislation, and dozens of innovative companies. The excuses for segregation or coloring data because it's voice or SMS text are simply ludicrous. The typical usage of our spectrum is atrociously inefficient and under utilized. In addition the excuses for locking down the EM spectrum transmission frequencies to narrow channels is equally illogical.

The Excuses:

- A spokesperson from T-Mobile "Our goal is to provide an optimal wireless experience for our entire customer base, and if it's determined that a customer's use of a third-party application may lessen this experience for our other customers, we will take the necessary precautions to protect and maintain an excellent customer experience on our network," a company spokeswoman said by email.
- AT&T responding to Skype's petition to open things up "When one wireless user has a less efficient handset than the rest of the network, the entire network suffers. By subjecting all wireless users to the experimentation of the few subscribers interested in alternative devices, application of [such] connection rules to the wireless world acts to the detriment of all users."

That's it? That's the best they can come up with? Those are the type of arguments holding America back from hi speed wireless broadband. If I could grow more hair to pull out I would. Does anyone actually believe these ill conceived comments? At the very least our big telecom corporations need some better spin doctors and marketeers. Can anyone "in power" do something about it? Unfortunately it may be some time before our legislators catch up with our growing demands for technology and ubiquitous hi speed internet for all devices.

For anyone else interested in this topic I highly suggest the following pertinent (and more knowledgeable) articles:

- [What Is An "Aggressive Tech Agenda"?](#)
- [More On Open Spectrum](#)
- [Open Spectrum is Good Policy](#)
- [Google's Brilliant Proposal](#) by Tom Evslin
- [A letter from Google to the Federal Communications Commission](#)
- [More on Frequency Regulation - It Matters](#) by Tom Evslin
- [Open Mobile Internet Now!](#)
- [National Broadband Plan? Dream Big, Feds, Very Big](#)
- [Net Neutrality Advocates Call For Fast, Universal Access To The Net](#)
- [Apply Net Neutrality to Skype on Smartphones, Group Asks Feds](#)

Social Emergence Asynchronous Management (SEAM)

I sent out an email to a couple of friends about a potential large scale project that I'd like to spearhead. The idea is to develop a simple framework for a community to access and manage just about any sized project. If you're reading this, you're more than welcome to contribute to the development team for any open source part of the project (which may be open extensions to a base framework, or some other pieces of the project).

What defines the type of social media collaborative project I'm interested in:

- connected by a fairly powerful underlying database
- and an easy to use/update front end:

Some examples of social designs or group media efforts. The overall collaborative goal is improving the web domain whether or not the users care.

- YouTube
- squidoo
- twitter, myspace, facebook, friendfeed, gmail, etc

I'd like to have a framework/tool for any project organizers/managers. They can specify their own design goal.

What the working software will provide

- Anyone can initiate a project, and may dictate the terms for others to

- join/contribute to that project
- Once an individual contributes, their efforts are documented and remain part of the project history
- Project management teams and leadership can be passed or coordinated by the project initiator or a board of supporting individuals
- graphic interface for standalone and web based versions
- open Application Programming Interface (API) for extension via stand alone programs, web browsers (add-ons), html (scripts), widgets, etc.
 - provide an RSS Feed to show current categorized updates for specific projects or user specified sub/supersets

Basic Requirements:

- scalable
- customizable
- fast/efficient
- run or be easily accessible on all common Operating Systems (windows, linux/unix)
- easy to understand & use
- will need to be able to communicate information between accepted networking and feed tools

What would SEAM do

1. simple user interface to a heavily connected database network
2. objects in the system may contain many links to other objects and the links are given contextual information or tags
3. the BIG database may be organized or displayed in many different (user specified) ways
 1. so anyone could see who is responsible for making an abstract plan more concrete
 2. who else is working with/for them
 3. lists of objectives/milestones (+deadlines/due dates)
 4. and links to how to measure them/mark completed tasks
4. a simple set of rules for adding things to the database and for adding additional links to other parts of the database as time goes on (hence emergence, a complex database emerges from a collaborative community using simplistic user interface)

Some related readings

some future movement of the web evolution

- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emergence>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semantic_web
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linked_Data
- <http://www.w3.org/DesignIssues/RDFnot.html>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giant_Global_Graph
- <http://dig.csail.mit.edu/breadcrumbs/node/215>

Related software/sites/communities:

- <http://sourceforge.net/>
- <http://esw.w3.org/topic/SemanticWebTools>
- <http://www.openair.com/home/solutionsProjMgmt.html?leadsource=oag1>
- <http://www.dmoz.org/about.html>
 - organization of web information, a little out of our immediate scope

Similar Software

- <http://openproj.org/openproj>
- <http://www.redmine.org/>
- <http://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/MediaWiki>
- <http://www.dotproject.net/>

VCs building sand castles that float



Mo Koyfman's post "[First Destruction, Then Creation](#)" challenged my imagination of the ideal information business. In it he briefly discusses the large gradients of change in today's economy. The needs of our society are being fulfilled by changing business models. Fundamentally different systems are being formed in the new market space.

The following are key concerns raised by Mr. Koyfman for any emerging entrepreneur or

company:

“We have to start by asking what does the consumer or customer *really* want? How can we deliver it to them as efficiently and effectively as possible? What is the least it can cost us to deliver? What can we fairly charge for it?”

I included my initial comments from his post with some extended answers:

1. We have to start by asking what does the consumer or customer *really* want?
 - *Consumers want the truth, entertainment, and sometimes to be lied to. I'd like to work on the first two.* I just honed in my comment on a slice of the consumer market that desires information. There is a (thankfully) small sector of the market that really does require spin doctoring, but I'm not interested in that business. Most people want honest information from a trustworthy source, and they'd like to enjoy the experience of getting that information. Hence, truth and entertainment.
2. How can we deliver it to them as efficiently and effectively as possible? What is the least it can cost us to deliver? (I grouped these two questions together as they're related)
 - *How much of your time are you willing to sacrifice on optimizing & market tactics? As I like to envision myself an "idea guy" I'd prefer crafting novel tools instead of endlessly reworking broken ones. Obviously, that doesn't get me too far unless I can find an army of energetic workers to help make my abstract concepts become concrete.* The majority of our businesses are focused on keeping momentum going, and maintaining products rather than innovating. That's why I'm pretty psyched about the role VCs are playing. They are ultimately after profit, but they are doing it by funding small groups with big ideas. Sounds like a pretty fantastic job (I guess it has to be if it's going to require 70-80 hour work weeks to juggle all the responsibilities).
3. What can we fairly charge for it?
 - *More than it's worth, but less than people are currently willing to pay.* It has to be a profitable product or service, and it has to be high value to the customer by being priced at a lower level than they are willing to pay. Some would say you should charge precisely what a customer is willing to pay, but I'd prefer my customers always feeling like they got a bargain by shopping from me.

Another venture capitalist's (Fred Wilson) post illustrates an example of a company that is poised to thrive in the emerging media market, [Facebook](#). His entry [When You Are A Public Company Without Being Public](#) discusses the fairly open nature of Facebook's finances, some rumored revenue numbers and a forecast of Facebook going public.

One commenter, [MartinEdic](#), drew attention to the fact that Facebook has grown into a ubiquitous social beast:

“I am middle-aged and have 160 active friends on Facebook, most of whom have joined in the last six months and are not techies. Virtually none of them Twitter for example (I have posted guides to Twitter at the request of some). What does this

mean in the real world? Facebook, as a platform, has crossed the chasm. No other social media platform, including blogging, has done this. This means the market they are creating is not demographically techies, young people, niche interest groups- it is everyone.

When you are reaching everyone your revenue models don't have to be earthshaking innovations. They not only reach a broad swath that is growing, they have a lot of data about everyone- much more, for example, than Google has. They not only know our demographics and interests, they know our range of people who share those interests. Our 'influence' in other words. From a marketing POV, we only need to focus our Facebook buys on the influencers and we exponentially increase our reach with relevance. This is huge."

And my response:

Great viewpoint Martin (breaking out of the tech market), you just have to sell the tops of the social trees in facebook to create massive need for your product(s). But any social media is going to have to keep users engaged. That's a tough job. Facebook has to make our social lives not just easier, but better for it to keep people coming back.

My opinion on the direction of social media:

What I think many folks want is a big virtual hub where they can hang out and catch up with friends. Text and images only go so far. Sharing a game together can be fun (mmorpg) but can get stale. Even voice conferencing has it's limits for large group back and forth interaction.

I perceive winning social media companies sharing deeper: People need to be able to share not just a brief picture of a restaurant they went to for dinner, or a family gathering. In order to really connect we need to share deeper. I'm talking about sharing fears, hopes, dreams, future plans all the stuff that makes us who we are in a virtual environment. It's hard to feel comfortable opening that much of ourselves to the public (and we probably shouldn't).

This simple blog entry can't capture the gratitude I have for all the hard working venture capitalists that make our world better one company at a time. Hope you fine ladies and gents know that your tireless efforts don't go unnoticed.

Will Google win the RSS Feed Wars?

The short answer: yes, it probably will although it will have to share market with alltop and friendfeed amongst others.

The long answer:

There's a struggle going on right now between social media companies who are vying for your attention. Their corporate leaders are competing to leverage your attention into profit. While the financial path has yet to be revealed we can expect product promotions (contextual ads) and software sales (social games). The way humanity is communicating

over the web is evolving as all languages do. Social media companies want that interaction to occur on their specific platforms. I envision a near future where a dominant open architecture social media will cover it's maintenance cost via network knowledge, business enhancement, and revolutionary design methods (natural language processing & [intelligent advertising](#)).

Tangent to and social media in their own right are [RSS feed](#) readers or aggregators. These are umbrella software platforms/websites which are designed to be the one place you go for your information on a regular basis. What they are trying to capitalize on is the fairly common method of browsing feeds from a single page, as opposed to visiting each of our favorite information sites.

A "short" list of the popular feed readers follows, most of these tools provide some additional utility to distinguish them.

- [Google Reader](#)
- [friendfeed](#)
- [Alltop](#)
- [twine](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Ning](#)
- [Attensa](#)
- [Bloglines](#)
- [feedlounge](#)
- [Gritwire](#)
- [NewsAlloy](#)
- [newsgator](#)
- [blogs.com](#)
- [NewsBeet](#)
- [Matoumba](#)
- [feedshow](#)
- [feedkiller](#)
- [voyage](#)
- [toluu](#)

Google Reader allows commenting, and can update you with alerts to changed streams or responses/comments on material you are following. Friendfeed integrates many other social tools into it's display and you can choose to follow many of your friends internet activities or have conversations. Alltop has several top level indexing pages ([check out my alltop](#)). The article preview page with mouse over is a wonderful utility.

Who has time to try out all the other feed readers? Once you find one that works it's easier to stick with it than to setup another account/reader.

Conclusions

The message I leave you with is one full of possibilities of emerging social media. Social software is connecting people in ways never commonly used by individuals (one to many, and many to one messages). Media will be personalized to our tastes, and we will be in a much stronger position as consumers to choose the type and format of information we desire. By formalizing large scale social design projects, new massive design systems can be realized. Although these teams may initially be fueled entirely by the interest of volunteers, with some effort fair fiscal rewards can be envisioned by creative leaders.

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