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CONTENT CURATION

What It Is, and Why Should I Care?

INTRODUCTION

In the age of the Internet, social media, and mobile devices, we are bombarded by content every hour of every day—information that comes from millions of sources and is delivered to millions of end points. It's unavoidable, sure, but why should a business—with responsibility for a brand or a product or its employees' awareness—care about this mass of data?

Because competition for the attention span of your intended audience has never been fiercer. If you are not satiating your audience's appetite for content, your company risks falling into obscurity. Unlike traditional "look at me" advertising, which everyone has tired of, content marketing says something more akin to "let me educate and entertain you, so that you can make the best decision for yourself." It's a subtler, and more long-term approach, but it works—and you need content to make it happen.

It's expensive and near impossible to create enough original content to keep up with the demands of an always-on digital audience. Even on a steady diet of sugar and caffeine, there will never be enough hours in the day for you to internally create everything you need. So what do you do? If you're smart, you start curating external content to supplement your own, but that comes with its own set of challenges.

No matter what kind of business you are, finding and selecting relevant content from oceans of information is time-consuming, expensive, and difficult to do well. Whether you need to fuel a brand voice, help clients stand out in the crowd, effectively sell a product, or educate an internal team, relevant content is the answer. But searching on Google, then copying and pasting the results is not exactly a dream solution.

THE PROBLEM: AN EVER-EXPANDING WEB

Considering that content creation alone is not a viable option, most businesses turn to the Internet to find third-party content to share. As a result, they go into content shock. Remember Eric Schmidt's famous words?

"There were 5 Exabytes of information created between the dawn of civilization through 2003, but that much information is now created every 2 days, and the pace is increasing." ERIC SCHMIDT

While Schmidt's quote may or may not be totally accurate, we can all agree that the web is constantly getting bigger – much bigger—at a much faster pace. Social networks and new blogging platforms are continually turning information consumers into information creators. While we should be thrilled that so much information is out there, not all of it is relevant or high-quality.

So, how do you find what's relevant? Without sophisticated tools and applications to help, most businesses turn to one or both of these avenues: search and social.

SEARCH: A HUNT FOR BURIED CONTENT

Search engines are faced with the same "TMI" problem. So, they have developed their own algorithms in an attempt to measure relevancy and credibility. Search works well if you are looking for specific information—like a phone number or a date. But it is severely lacking when it comes to in-depth exploration of a chosen topic. When people search for information, they find what they need, and they move on. In fact, the first page of search results receives 92% of search traffic. That means that there's a ton of information beyond the first page that no one ever looks at. There may be high-quality content buried on the 37th page of Google that is relevant to your business, but with traditional search, you will likely never see it.

SOCIAL MEDIA: THE CONTENT ECHO CHAMBER

Another potential way to find great content is through social media, but platforms like Twitter and Facebook present their own set of problems. While the entirety of the web may be getting bigger, the slice of content that we actually see every day may actually be getting smaller. Scrolling through your Twitter stream or Facebook news-feed is an easy way to find content, but what you'll find with that approach is less-than-ideal.

We often look to our friends on social media for new and timely information that may be relevant to us. But what results is something we like to call the "content echo chamber." On social media, we are more likely to comment on and share information from our closest friends, and once we share that information, our friends share that information. And the same stories from the same sources bounce around our social networks, which makes for a pretty lackluster content experience, and a definitive lack of "discovery."

WHAT WE ALL WANT: A WEB OF RELEVANCE

Since the amount of information available to us is expanding day after day, the portion of the web that we actually consume is shrinking. What businesses need is a web of relevance.

Businesses all want to find the best, most interesting content that is relevant to them and to their audience. The web of relevance is all about surfacing the great content that we know is out there, but we can't seem to find within the current systems of search or social media.

Think of this problem of discovering a web of relevance as the proverbial needle in a haystack. When the web was young, maybe that haystack could fit in a coffee cup. But now that haystack fills a stadium and the old methods of sort-and-find are no longer adequate, new technology is needed to pull that needle from the stadium—to find relevant content that supplements your own and feeds the content appetites of your audience. This requires content that is personalized to you—

content that allows you to rise above the noise. But with search and social media not stepping up to the task, this is a difficult problem to solve.

THE SOLUTION: CURATING RELEVANT CONTENT

Information guides our lives—and like it or not, our lives are curated. We all make decisions based on the content we consume. Prospective customers or buyers want sufficient information to make the right choices. They want to believe that those they buy from are the experts in their fields, but also that they are unbiased at some level. And to be unbiased, a business needs to supplement their own original content with respected third-party content that is relevant and useful. So, why not find and thoughtfully select the best content from various sources to present to your audience in a meaningful way? That's curation.

Successful curation is all about relevance. Giving your audience the wrong content can be disastrous. Timing is obviously critical, and relevance is the biggest key. Relevance correlates directly with engagement, and for any business, engagement of your audience—whether it is made up of prospects, customers, or your internal team—is the ultimate goal.

It's easy to think about content as a marketing tool. Content is the currency in which every marketer trades. We buy based on awareness and on understanding a product's value.

Marketers are continually challenged to get the right content to their intended audiences—to inform, to influence behavior, generate new leads, or demonstrate thought leadership. Success or failure all depends on serving up the right content at the right time.

Countless recent studies of marketers have determined that they are increasingly facing problems like these:

1) Having the time, bandwidth and budget to create quality content.
2) Finding truly engaging content on the web.
3) Sharing enough relevant content to keep up.

Marketers are seeing that content is paramount, and they are trying to keep up with demand. Curation of high-quality content alongside brand or corporate content can help solve many, if not all, of these problems.

But content curation isn't just for marketers. They may be the earliest adopters of curation as a business solution, but curating relevant content can help businesses of all kinds find success online.

Here's what curation can do for:

AGENCIES:
Clients need content, and managing the websites or social presences for all of your clients at once is a daunting task. Curating relevant content for each client, alongside their own original offerings, helps them keep up with their audience and helps you save time so you can take on new business.

PUBLISHERS:
Traditional publishers face obscurity if they don't go digital. A monthly editorial calendar pace is too slow for an online audience, but dishing out relevant third-party content alongside your own on a daily basis can keep users engaged and on your site for longer.

SALES:
In sales, connecting with your prospects is the name of the game. Content curation can help you become the smartest guy (or gal) in the room, and give you enough content to share online to build a valuable social media presence.

TEAMS:
No matter what industry you are in, as a business, you want your team to be well-informed each and every day. You can use curated content to arm your team members with the most up-to-date and relevant information that they need to be successful.

MARKETERS:
Last, but not least, marketers use content curation to keep up with the demands of a digital audience and help their brands stand out. Every brand has a voice, and using curating external content can build valuable thought-leadership and trust with any brand's audience.

So, we see how curating content can help just about any business with the goal of staying relevant online. But how do we actually curate? Discovering and delivering the content is still a struggle.

WHAT DOES THE RIGHT TOOL LOOK LIKE?

Successful curation depends on the ability to discover relevant content, refine exactly what you are looking for, and easily deliver that content to your digital audience. Any effective content curation tool must accomplish these tasks and make it easy to deliver content—automatically—to social media feeds, newsletters, email, a website, or mobile devices. But there are other hurdles to jump over as well.

For example, whether content is publicly available, or sitting behind a company's firewall—the right tool will easily accommodate both. It should provide a wide set of filters that can prevent certain topics or companies, perhaps a competitor, from ending up in your content stream. Or include filters that can limit content to a specific regional area. Filters to determine the frequency of content delivery, or the level of redundancy in the content. Most importantly, the curator using the tool should be able to determine how the tool delivers content, deciding whether the technology is capable of doing all discovery, curation, and delivery, or if it needs human assistance, which allows control over which content is distributed—or not.

CURRENT CURATION SOLUTIONS

A number of tools exist and have emerged to help businesses discover relevant digital content and curate it, sorting the good from the bad, the meaningful from the irrelevant.

Still, the most popular means of curating the web is "search, cut, paste, and post." Great content exists out there—but if it's not popular, the chances of finding it on Google are slim. And even if this content is discovered, it is a time-consuming and tedious process to sift through fields of Google-blue links, find ones that are relevant, and then manually paste to a Twitter feed, Facebook page, or website. Using search to curate is also a proactive process—search requires constant query. It is not designed to provide a steady and real-time stream of information.

Other tools offer parts of the solution. Some have discovery algorithms, but don't offer a big enough content library to pull from. These tools require the customer to define the sources of information where they expect to find content for their audience. This represents a major issue: given the size and richness of the web, it is virtually impossible for a business to predict exactly where the next great story will be published. So, when picking your own sources for content, we're back in the echo chamber, and most organizations will default to the most popular default sources. The result is a stream of information that is not unique, is not personalized, and is ultimately unlikely to provide your business with any real value.

On the other side of things, there are many tools that help with the distribution of content—tools that make it easy to post to multiple social media accounts or schedule content posts in advance. But these tools suffer from the same thorny question: "How do I find enough quality content to deliver to all of these outlets?"

TRAPIT: A COMPLETE SOLUTION

We designed Trapit to offer the answer. The Trapit application is comprehensive; an end-to-end solution that spans Trapit's patented content discovery algorithms to our Webby award-winning user experience. We haven't left anything out—content discovery, sophisticated curator controls and filters, easy delivery to any destination, scheduling in advance, analytics that help guide your strategy—it's all there. Trapit will do the heavy lifting, scanning the real-time web all day every day, grabbing the pieces that are relevant to your business, and presenting them to you in one clean application.

Your business can control the sources of information, tapping into Trapit's library of over 100,000 vetted sources, and also including valuable corporate content of your own. Trapit learns more about the content preferences of each individual user with each use, and offers a rich menu of options for sharing information across social networks, or saving key content for delivery later. You can discover the best content you never knew was out there, and rest easy knowing that Trapit will do the hardest part for you.

We serve up this content in a clean and easy-to-use interface, allowing you or your team to continue the curation process Trapit has started. We let you select the section of media types you want to pull from: text, video, (coming soon) audio, or any combination. Give a thumbs-up to the content you like, and a thumbs-down to what you don't, and Trapit will listen and learn from your feedback.

Trapit also allows curation capabilities like modifying the title, the summary, or a photo in the content thumbnail, and allows annotation of the content. Easy-to-use filters will narrow down the content to match your needs. And, once you've decided which content is ready to publish, Trapit offers a wide variety of distribution endpoints—be it your website, microsite, social networks, mobile devices, or native applications.

You can publish content immediately, or use Trapit's highly-productive scheduling to spread content out over several hours—or days. We even offer a custom-branded iPad application as a vehicle to help you reach your audience with the right content at the right time. To top it all off, we've added analytics that allow you to see what's working and what's not.

Trapit is integrated with popular social networks, social media management platforms, and marketing automation tools, so you can publish anywhere and tie leads directly back to your curation strategy. Even better, Trapit allows management all of the analysis from a single screen.

Don't allow your business to drown in the oceans of data that are obscuring your brand—or keeping your employees underwater. Unlock and curate the content your audience depends on with a little help from Trapit.

To learn more about Trapit's comprehensive content discovery and curation application, visit the How It Works section of our website.

CONCLUSION

Content is the engine that businesses run on, yet our audiences are drowning in a sea of data, making it difficult to keep prospects and customers focused on your message. If you are not curating personalized, relevant content to supplement the content you are creating internally, your brand risks obscurity.

Many companies are still trying to supplement their own content by manually searching, cutting, and pasting – an expensive, time-consuming, and ultimately futile task. As an alternative, many tools have emerged to help either find or distribute the necessary content. But most of these tools have significant limitations in accuracy, ease-of-use, or in addressing the wide range of issues associated with the discovery, curation, delivery, and analysis of relevant, personalized content.

Trapit is the most advanced and intuitive way to curate content for your audience. We help business users discover, curate, and deliver engaging content in real-time, at the right time, and to any device. Trapit draws from more than 100,000 original sources, including blogs, professional journals, news services, magazines, video feeds, and podcasts, taming masses of data into manageable streams of content personalized and relevant to you. And, despite the broad range of content discovery, curation, delivery, and analytics that Trapit offers, it is remarkably affordable, easily deployed, and fun to use.

Visit us at http://www.trap.it to request a demo.

ABOUT THE COMPANY

Trapit has created the world's most powerful application for curating content. We help organizations of all kinds discover and deliver high quality, relevant content to share their brand's authentic voice, engage their audience, and get results.

We grew out of a $200 million DARPA-funded research project in AI and Machine Learning contracted to SRI International, the same collaboration that created the Internet. The largest artificial intelligence project in history, this project also produced the natural language processing and machine learning technology that eventually became Apple's Siri.

Dedicated to taming information overload on the web, we originally created Trapit as a consumer application that helped users discover personally-relevant news. Businesses took notice, and now Trapit is a commercial application that combines the ease-of-use and elegance of our award-winning consumer app with the feature set an organization needs to engage its audience and measure ROI. Built on the requests of customers and the feedback of more than 10 million users of Trapit's consumer app, our commercial application empowers authentic storytelling for the data-driven world.

Founded in 2010, Trapit is headquartered in Palo Alto, California, and is backed by Horizon Ventures, SRI International and others.

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